

# **IOWA BIRD LIFE**

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## **IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life is a quarterly publication of the Union.*

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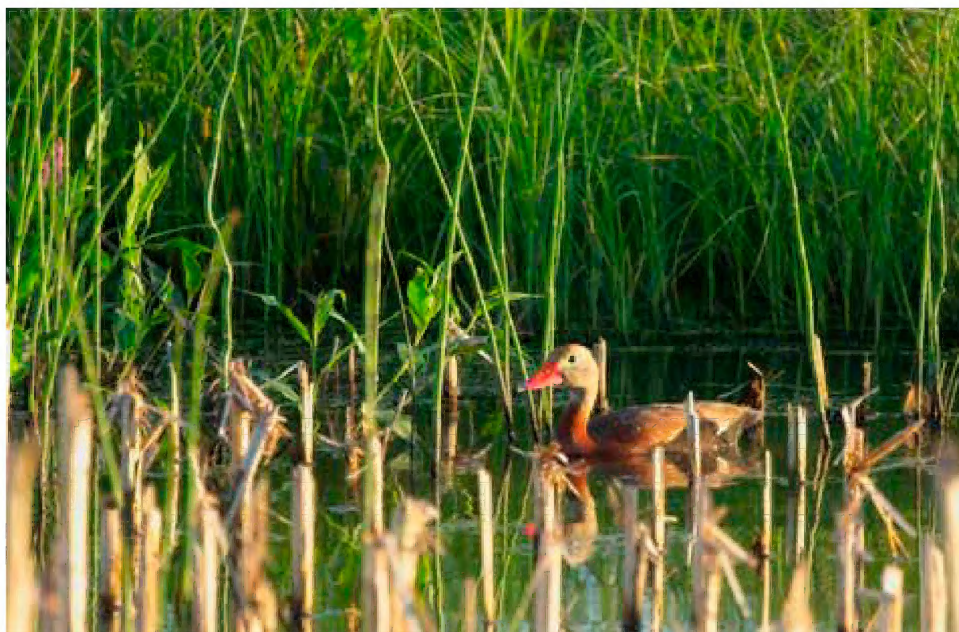
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# First Iowa Breeding Record of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck

*W. Ross Silcock*

Beginning in the late 1970s, the Black-bellied Whistling-Duck began to expand its summer range northward on the Great Plains (Lasley and Sexton 1988, Robbins 2018). In the past few years, successful breeding has occurred as far north as Kansas and Missouri (see below) and so it is not surprising that breeding would soon occur in Iowa. Accordingly, broods were reported on



*Figure 1. Female Black-bellied Whistling-Duck along Allis Road, Mills, 26 June 2019. Photograph by Thomas Green, Council Bluffs, IA.*

the Missouri River floodplain along Allis Road in Mills County, Iowa during spring and summer 2019 by local residents.

I became aware that breeding may have occurred via an 18 July 2019 email from Mace Hack, recently retired from Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, who had been contacted by Jeff Green, a landowner on Allis Road in Mills County, west of Interstate 29 and 1–2 miles south of H10. On 1 August, I drove to Allis Road and talked to a neighbor of Mr. Green, John Poore, who had observed one and possibly two large broods of small ducklings on his property earlier in the spring; there were extensive wetlands along the Missouri River due to major spring flooding in March and April. I also spoke with Jeff Green's uncle, Tom Green, and was shown photographs he had taken 25–26

June of adult male and female Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks (Figure 1), but there were no photographs of broods. There was no doubt whistling-ducks had been in the area based on the photographs, and the Greens and John Poore described the adults well, including the prominent white wing patches in flight. On 1 August, I searched wetlands in the area and on the John Poore property



Figure 2. Female Black-bellied Whistling-Duck and brood of 10–11 one-week-old ducklings along Allis Road, Mills, 9 August 2019. Photograph by Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA.

next to the Tom Green property without success.

At around the same time, two Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks had appeared at Lake Manawa, some four miles north of Allis Road, around 14 July (pers. obs.), with a peak count there of 11 on 28 July (Loren and Babs Padel-ford, personal communication) and were last reported 14 August (eBird.org).

On 4 August, Tom Green let me know that his daughter had seen a brood of small flightless ducklings near his residence on 1 August, but they were unable to relocate the brood for photographs. I searched again 4 and 6 August, also without success, although very large numbers of young Wood Ducks were in the area, with a peak count of 135 on 6 August. I decided that earlier broods of whistling-ducks, if correctly identified, may have moved on or were hidden in the extensive area of flood-induced wetlands.

On 9 August at 6:39 p.m., I was surprised to get an email from Ann Johnson telling me that neighbors to the Greens and Poores, Ted and Stefanie Kallhoff, had posted to social media that they were at that moment watching a young brood of whistling-ducks in a ditch in their front yard. Amazed and in some disbelief, I hurriedly drove the 30 minutes or so from my home in Tabor, Iowa, to the location and as I pulled up to the Kallhoff residence around 7:20 p.m., Ted and Stefanie were looking through a scope at a hen and ducklings, which were in the roadside ditch at the front edge of their yard about 40 yards distant, but not visible from the road itself. I immediately obtained photographs of the 10 (possibly 11) ducklings (Figures 2 and 3); they looked



to be about a week old (Stephen J. Dinsmore, pers. comm). While we were observing the hen and brood, the drake flew in and rested on a nearby post in the water, seemingly unperturbed by our presence. After a while the brood and the drake drifted further away amongst the thick emergent vegetation. The last known sighting of at least part of the brood was by Loren and Babs Padelford 11 August (pers. comm.).

The advance northward of the breeding range on the Great Plains is associated with extensive wetlands, assisted by the presence of Wood Duck boxes. The first three breeding records for Kansas were confirmed in 2017 in two counties, Barton and Pawnee; reports were received from no fewer than 11 Kansas counties that year (Charles Otte, pers. comm.). Breeding was reported again in Kansas in 2019 with an adult and young in a pond near Great Bend, Barton County (Charles Otte, pers. comm.). There are two breeding records for Missouri, both in Wood Duck boxes: unsuccessfully in 2010 in Lafayette County, and in 2017, when ducklings were seen with adults 5 September near Otter Slough, Stoddard County (Robbins 2018). Breeding has not been proven in Nebraska (<https://birds.outdoornebraska.gov/black-bellied-whistling-duck/>).



Figure 3. A closer view of part of the Black-bellied Whistling-Duck brood along Allis Road, Mills, 9 August 2019. Photographed by Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA.

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# **A Review of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck Occurance in Iowa**

*James J. Dinsmore and Stephen J. Dinsmore*

Birds are well known for their flight abilities and for appearing in locations far outside their normal range. In some cases, these wanderings develop into a pattern of vagrancy and occasionally lead to the species greatly expanding its breeding range. One of the best examples of that pattern is the Cattle Egret, which, after reaching South America from Africa, eventually made its way to North America, where it is now well established. In Iowa, species that have shown significant range expansions in recent years include Great-tailed Grackle (Dinsmore and Dinsmore 1993), House Finch (Cecil and Dinsmore 1995), and nesting Bald Eagles (Ehresman 1999). Currently, another species, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, is providing a dramatic example of vagrancy and range expansion.

Historically the Black-bellied Whistling-Duck occurred in coastal regions of Mexico and Central America, northern South America, and south through Brazil to northern Argentina. The Rio Grande Valley in southern Texas was the northern limit of its nesting range. In the 1900s, it expanded its nesting range north in Texas, east into coastal Louisiana and much of peninsular Florida, and also established isolated nesting populations in South Carolina, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Arizona (Baldassarre 2014).

Concurrent with the expansion of the species' nesting range in the United States, Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks established a pattern of dispersing widely, especially during the nonbreeding season. As a result, they were soon found in most states east of the Rocky Mountains including Iowa and north into southern Canada. A comprehensive examination of their overall dispersal is beyond the scope of this paper. Here we summarize and discuss the known records of this species in Iowa through fall 2019.

## **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCKS IN IOWA**

The first record of this species in Iowa was an adult female captured and photographed by Ken Reynolds and De Wayne Jackson at Zirbel Slough in Cerro Gordo County on 8 May 1977. Both Reynolds and Jackson were wildlife biologists with extensive experience with waterfowl who recognized the species when it was caught as part of a study of Mallards. They photographed the bird, examined it carefully and noted that it did not show any extensive wear of feathers or toenails that would suggest that it had been held in captivity, and released it. They and their supervisor published this observation along with a photograph in each article (Reynolds and Jackson 1977, Barratt 1977).

At that time, the Iowa Ornithologists' Union had not organized a Records Committee but its Checklist Committee reviewed the report and added the species to its official state checklist. The Records Committee, organized in 1980, recognized the identification as being correct but decided that the bird might



**Table 1. Records of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in Iowa, 1977–2019**

Date(s)	Location	No.	Reference
8 May 1977	Zirbel Slough, <i>Cerro Gordo</i>	1	Reynolds and Jackson (1977), Barratt (1977)
29 May 1987	nw <i>Boone</i>	1	Dinsmore (1987), Kent (1988, 1994, 1995)
23 October 1988	Ingham Lake, <i>Emmet</i>	1	Kent (1989, 1995)
24 October 1993	Blue Lake, <i>Monona</i>	1	Kent (1994, 1995)
1 November 1993	Big Marsh, <i>Butler</i>	1	Kent (1994, 1995)
10 Apr–19 May 1998	Tomahawk Marsh, <i>Sac</i>	1	Reisz (1999), Kent (1999a)
early Apr–5 May 1999	near Columbus Junction, <i>Louisa</i>	1	Kent (1999b)
18 April 2005	West Okoboji, <i>Dickinson</i>	3 or 4	Kenne (2005), Johnson (2006)
19 April 2005	Alden, <i>Hardin</i>	3 or 4	Kenne (2005), Johnson (2006)
20 April 2005	Iowa City, <i>Johnson</i>	3 or 4	Kenne (2005), Johnson (2006)
22 June 2005	Green Bay Bottoms, <i>Lee</i>	1	Dinsmore (2005)
26 Jul–12 Sep 2005	Lake Anita S.P., <i>Cass</i>	1	Dinsmore (2005), Hertzel (2006)
6 May 2007	Lake Manawa, <i>Pottawattamie</i>	1	Kenne (2007)
27 May–4 Jun 2007	Mount Pleasant, <i>Henry</i>	6	Kenne (2007)
10 June 2008	Beaman, <i>Grundy</i>	2	Dinsmore (2008)
30 April 2009	Diamond Lake, <i>Poweshiek</i>	1	Kenne (2009)
1 May 2009	Hobbs Pits, <i>Carroll</i>	1	Kenne (2009)
23 September 2009	2 shot near Fort Madison, <i>Lee</i>	1	Hertzel (2010)
12 August 2010	Lake Rathbun, <i>Appanoose</i>	1	Hertzel (2011)
2–13 Aug 2013	Lake Ponderosa, <i>Poweshiek</i>	3	Hertzel (2014), Johnson (2014)
10 May 2014	near Spencer, <i>Clay</i>	1	Harms (2014)
2 June 2014	Crow Creek WA, <i>Scott</i>	1	Dinsmore (2014)
28 June 2014	near Sloan, <i>Woodbury</i>	2	Dinsmore (2014)
3 July 2014	Green Island W.A., <i>Jackson</i>	1	Dinsmore (2014)
13 May 2015	private pond, <i>Fremont</i>	1	Harms (2015)
15–21 Jun 2015	Wapsi River Env Ctr, <i>Scott</i>	2	Dinsmore (2015)
8 July 2015	Sweet Marsh, <i>Bremer</i>	2	Dinsmore (2015)
7–20 Sep 2015	Union Slough NWR, <i>Kossuth</i>	1	Hertzel (2016)
2 May 2017	Council Bluffs, <i>Pottawattamie</i>	4	Harms (2017)
9 June 2018	Copper Creek L, <i>Polk</i>	1	Dinsmore (2018), Hertzel (2019b)
2 July 2018	near Solon, <i>Johnson</i>	1	Dinsmore (2018), Hertzel (2019b)
26 Jun–31 Jul 2019	L Manawa, <i>Pottawattamie</i>	up to 11	Dinsmore (2019)
13 Jul–7 Aug 2019	Cedar Lake, <i>Linn</i>	1	Dinsmore (2019), Caswell (2020)
16 Jun–Sep 2019	nw <i>Mills</i>	12	Dinsmore (2019)

have been released or escaped from captivity and did not accept the record to the official state list, listing its occurrence as hypothetical (Kent 1982, Kent et al. 1982). It wasn't until 1987 that a second record occurred, followed by another in 1988 (Table 1). The species was not accepted onto the Iowa list until 1994 when, after two specimens had been obtained, the original record and four subsequent ones were accepted to the Iowa list (Kent 1994).

To date, there have been 34 accepted records of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck for Iowa (Table 1). The report of three birds in August 2013 at Lake Ponderosa (see Table 1) was not accepted by the Records Committee at

that time (Johnson 2014). The committee cited the tameness of the birds and concerns that they might have escaped from captivity. At the request of the authors of this paper, that record was re-reviewed in October 2019. We cited the growing number of records of the species in Iowa that showed evidence of a strong pattern of vagrancy and the fact that the species is known to commonly associate with humans. The revote by the committee unanimously accepted the record (Hertzel 2019a) and it is included in this summary.

The reports are scattered from throughout Iowa with no clear pattern of occurrence (Figure 1). Birds have been found in 28 counties with only a single report from most. Pottawattamie had the most reports (three) and four others (Johnson, Lee, Poweshiek, and Scott) have had two reports each. Despite the tendency for birding activity in Iowa to center on populated areas, no Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks have been found in highly visited birding hotspots such as Saylorville and Red Rock reservoirs.

To examine Black-bellied Whistling-Duck distribution within Iowa, we divided the state into three approximately equal-sized units east to west across the state and made a similar division north to south (see map inside the front

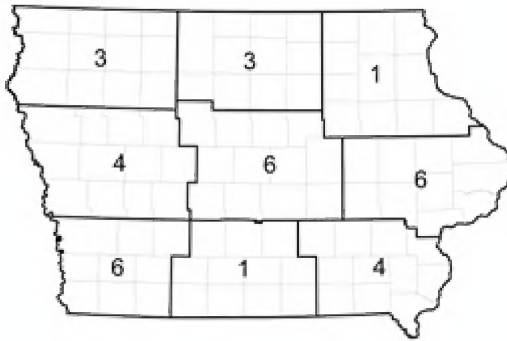


Figure 1. Regional distribution of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in Iowa from 1977-2019. Numerals indicate the number of records for each region. See Table 1 for details on individual records.

cover of Kent and Dinsmore 1996). Using these subdivisions and considering the wandering group of April 2005 as three reports, the 34 total reports were fairly evenly spaced longitudinally throughout the state (Figure 1), with 13 from the western third of Iowa, 10 from the central third, and 11 from the eastern third. Latitudinally the distribution was not so even with seven in the northern third, 16 in the central third, and 11 in the southern third. The number of reports has increased since the first one in 1977. By decade, there was a

single report in the 1970s, two in the 1980s, four in the 1990s, 10 in the 2000s, and 17 in the 2010s (Table 1).

A review of the 32 records (the April 2005 record is only entered for the first encounter) indicate that most of them were first encountered in late spring and summer. Dates of first occurrence for Black-bellied Whistling-Duck records in Iowa range from 10 April to 1 November. By month, the dates of first occurrence were: April (4), May (8), June (8), July (5), August (2), September (2), October (2), and November (1).

Most of the reports (21) were of a single bird and four others were of two birds. Other than the nesting record (see Silcock 2020), the largest group was of 11 birds. Most of the reports (21) were of birds seen only one day and the



others were present for periods ranging from 7 days to as long as 49 days. Of the eight reports where birds were present more than one day, other than the Mills County record in 2019, the average length of stay was 24 days. In general the reports from Iowa suggest that these birds move on rapidly and that few stayed at a site for more than a day or two. The three-day trek of a group of three or four birds in April 2005 included 107 miles in one day between the first two locales, and then another 108 miles the next day to the third site.

Birds were photographed in 27 of the 34 reports (79%), an amazingly high percentage, and the birds shot by hunters in Monona and Butler counties are now specimens at Iowa State University. Only reports from Cass, Emmet, Grundy, Lee (2009), and Sac counties were not documented with a photograph or a specimen. Presumably the bright and noticeable coloration, the tameness the species often shows, and the increasing use of cameras by birders made such a figure possible.

When we started working on this paper in summer 2019, we gave little thought to whether the species would nest in Iowa and considered it unlikely in the near future. At the time, the nearest nesting records were from Oklahoma and Tennessee. We assumed that the birds would continue to appear in Iowa, perhaps at an increasing rate but it seemed unlikely that they would nest here and probably not in the near future. When the birds showed up in Mills County, Ross Silcock was able to follow up on reports from local residents regarding the presence of possible breeding Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks and eventually obtain photographs of a week-old brood (Silcock 2020). It is noteworthy that this species also bred for the first time in Nebraska (Ross Silcock, personal communication), Illinois, and Missouri in 2019.

## SUMMARY

The Black-bellied Whistling-Duck has a clear pattern of vagrancy in Iowa with an increase in the number of reports during the past five decades. Most of the records are from late spring and summer with few in late fall and none in winter. Many of the records are of one or occasionally two birds with the rest being relatively small groups. They seem to be very mobile and seldom stay in one place more than a day. The trek of 3 or 4 birds moving through three counties in three days is instructive of their mobility. The big questions for the future are (1) will this vagrancy pattern continue, and (2) will a permanent nesting population become established in Iowa?

This paper would not have been possible without the thorough reports from many people. Paul Hertzell took the time to have the Records Committee re-review the 2013 report. Ross Silcock's searches in Mills County led to an exciting discovery that made this review more complete. We thank all of these people for their efforts.

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## Meet an Iowa Birder—Pip Fisher

*Robert Cecil*

Pip Fisher is a late arrival to the birding flock. After his birth in Iowa City in September, 1970, he spent a few years in elementary school there before his parents moved first to an acreage in rural Solon and then to a 100-acre “hobby farm” in Johnson County. Although his mother and grandmother exposed him to the outdoors and to birds, his attention was distracted by the other diversions perhaps more seductive to a young boy—dirt bikes, go carts, a creek to fish in,



*Pip Fisher with extended family at Jester Park, Polk, 29 Oct 2017. Photograph by Sharon Bauer, Winterset, IA.*

and even a horse to ride. He adds that he learned to take care of goats, chickens, and pigs. “I have been richly blessed.”

Following graduation from Lone Tree High School in 1988, he went on to Central College in Pella where he earned a B.A. in Communication in 1992. “When I arrived at Central College on a

speech scholarship, I fell in with a great group of friends and was active in just about every presentational art form there is. I was in numerous small theatre productions, a DJ on the college radio station, on the Speech Team, and others.”

Pip’s first encounter with birding left him clearly underwhelmed. “I happened to be in Pella when the Common Eider hung out below the dam at Red Rock. I remember going out to the river with my parents to see the eagles and when we got there, everyone was looking at this crazy looking duck. I remember watching it just hanging out with other ducks, not really doing anything too exciting. I had to ask the DNR guy there, ‘why do I care I about this weird looking duck?’ Well,” commented Pip, “there are obviously lots of good reasons to care about a duck, and this duck was obviously lost.”

Pip’s work experience reads like a travelogue of America. Highlights include:



- Information specialist with NCS in Iowa City
- Senior processing coordinator with NCS in Lawrence, KS
- Information Technology Technician, Advanced Database Systems in Denver, CO where he worked with the emerging technology of connecting cameras to imaging software to allow image capture into databases.
- American Management Systems, Golden, CO, a broad-based billing software company. Over a couple of years he supported its Minerals Management Service, traveling to tribal governments in Browning, MT, Window Rock, AZ, Wind River, WY, and Cortez, CO to update their computers and servers. “All beautiful places in the middle of nowhere where oil is being pumped.” Back in Iowa now, he works for Wells Fargo, facilitating communications among the branch locations.

When it comes to birding, most birders share a common moment, the moment when a bird or perhaps a flock of birds kindles a curiosity that requires satisfaction. For Pip it was a funny looking American Robin. It was December in Gibbsville in northwestern Polk Co. He called his mom, who was a birder, and told her about it. “She asked if it had occurred to me that it might be not a robin but an entirely different species. I was looking at a Rufous-sided Towhee,” he explained, adding that he refuses to acknowledge the recent name change.

“I love adding birds to my yard list,” he says, adding that his best yard bird to date was a Northern Bobwhite last spring. “I live directly across the gravel road from the Saylorville Wildlife Area and I can actually see migrating raptors over the river, from my yard. Now if I could get better at identifying raptors by their silhouettes,” he admits, “I’d have a serious yard list. I also got to watch the creation of the Marsh Farm Wetland by the Iowa DNR and other agencies so I have a special affinity for it. After it was constructed it was filled up over the summer and by that fall it was already attracting birds like Northern Harriers, various ducks, Canada Geese, Great Blue Herons, Spotted Sandpipers, and kingfishers. Since then I have seen several species there that were new for me including White-faced Ibis, both dowitchers, and Black Terns. It was my frequent visits to the wetland that really cemented my desire for a better scope.

“I have only taken a couple of real birding trips. One was to Texas in the very early spring where I got to see dozens of Roseate Spoonbills in their rookery at High Island, and at a nearby birding area I had great close up views of two Crested Caracaras, with one sitting on a nest. That was pretty impressive. I also went on a trip to Sax-Zim Bog on a trip that was hosted by the Carroll and Madison County Conservation Boards, with Matt Wetrich as one of the primary leaders. The highlights were Great Gray Owl, several Snowy Owls, Evening Grosbeaks, Gray Jays, Boreal Chickadees, and other species typical in the far north. Amazing close looks at the great gray made it special, but I had never heard of a Northern Hawk Owl and so to get a clear view of this

spectacular bird was the highlight of the trip for me.”

In addition to birding, Pip has been involved with other wildlife work. “I was a volunteer for the Colorado Division of Wildlife for four or five years before I moved back to Iowa. I spent most of my time collecting samples for the chronic wasting disease analysis program. He enjoys telling about “milking” a female walleye “as long as my arm,” and a pronghorn antelope round-up where they were trapping and collaring animals for release, drawing blood for study, etc. “I got to bareback wrestle at least three different pronghorns that day, and I suspect it may be a lifelong memory for both me and the pronghorn. I also was a program presenter for the Division of Wildlife, giving presentations on bats, coyotes, mountain lions, and bears to state park audiences and also to community and school groups that requested speakers.”

Now back in Iowa, Pip’s birding activities include leading field trips and participating in Christmas Bird Counts. “My Iowa debut presentation about birds and wildlife began at Marsh Farm Wetland when an Iowa DNR guy approached me while I was watching Spotted Sandpipers and asked if I was there for the presentation. No, I wasn’t, but I sure was interested. I told him about the birds I was seeing and watching the marsh develop during my many trips there, especially during migration. It turns out they were having a field trip for state officials and wildlife staff from other states demonstrating the amazing impacts the wetlands were having. I was pressed into service as a presenter even though I never expected to be one.”

Pip is current vice president of the IOU and jokes that his family is one the most influential families in the IOU since his Aunt Sharon Bauer serves as secretary. “That makes us influential, right?” He reinforces the assertion by adding that at the 2019 Spring IOU meeting in Keosauqua, “I probably had more family members present than anyone else. My wife of 20 years (Carol), my son (Lincoln), my mother (Barb Fisher-Krueger), my Aunt Sharon (Bauer) and her husband Lance, her twin sister and my Aunt Sheryl (Galvez) and her husband Daniel were all at that meeting—eight attendees (counting me) and spanning 3 generations. Oh, and my full name is Philip Leo Fisher III. I am named after both of my grandfathers and I’m remarkably proud of that. My son is PLF IV. He comes from a long line of sequels,” Pip adds with the wry and sometimes not-so-wry sense of humor he brings to moderating IOU banquets. While a Fisher family coup may not be in the works, we hope that we will continue to see Pip and his family for many years to come.

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## Yellow-billed Loon in Webster County

*Stephen J. Dinsmore*

On 12 August 2019, I received an email from Stewart Nelson of Ames with a question about loons in Iowa. He had visited Brushy Creek Lake in Webster County, thought he saw a pair of loons, and wondered if they could be nesting. I immediately replied that a few over-summer every year, but do not nest, and asked if he had any photos of the birds. He quickly forwarded me a photo showing two loons: one was clearly a basic-plumaged Common Loon, but the second bird was a bit out of focus and positioned at an odd angle. Despite these challenges, I thought the second bird's bill looked large in profile and pale, and wondered about the possibility of a Yellow-billed Loon. To be clear, Stewart had no inkling that these were other than Common Loons.

Later on 12 August, I followed up on the report and was surprised to con-



*Yellow-billed Loon, Brushy Creek SRA, Webster, 17 August 2019. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*

firm my hunch - the second bird was a subadult Yellow-billed Loon. I studied the bird from 5:10-5:47 p.m., always in the company of a basic-plumaged Common Loon for comparisons. Compared to the Common Loon, this bird was an estimated 25% larger by body size and had a habit of holding its head uptilted. The bill was massive – it was slightly longer than the head length, had a pronounced angled gonys, and was dull yellow in color with a grayish base. The forehead, crown, and nape were light brown and contrasted with a white chin and throat. There was also some light brown mottling on the lower

neck. The shoulders, mantle, upperwings, and flanks were dark brown with irregular pale white feather tips that gave the bird a mottled appearance. When the bird raised its wings, I could see that the primaries were missing because the bird was molting its flight feathers. The combination of size (larger than a Common Loon), massive dull yellow bill, pale face, and other subtle features eliminated other loon species, especially Common Loon. I aged the bird as a subadult (probably 1-2 years old) because of the mottled appearance and lack of any sign of the neck ring (this should be present on an older bird, even in basic plumage). The bird was still present on 30 September 2019 and was seen by many during its extended stay. I suspect the bird departed once it had completed its primary molt.

This represents the 6th record of a Yellow-billed Loon for Iowa. Interestingly, there is a previous summer record from July 2008 in Tama County (Dinsmore and Dinsmore 2008). The other records are from April (1), November (2), and December (1).

#### LITERATURE CITED

Dinsmore, S. J., and J. J. Dinsmore. 2008. Yellow-billed Loon in Tama County. *Iowa Bird Life* 78:193.

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Yellow-billed Loon, Brushy Creek SRA, Webster, 17 August 2019. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.



## Field Reports—Fall 2019

*Brandon Caswell*



*Brandon Caswell*

### WEATHER

Global fall temperatures in 2019 continued a warming trend, while the US cooled and dried from August to November. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration marked September 2019 as the hottest month globally in 140 years of records, tying September 2015. Since 2005, the ten globally warmest Septembers have occurred with 2015–2019 being the five warmest. While the planet also had its 2nd-hottest October on record, the month was the coolest in 10 years for the U.S. While November 2019 was cooler and drier in the US, the month of November was globally the 2nd hottest on record. The biggest news for the U.S. was that 2019 was the 2nd-wettest year on record, with January

through August being exceptionally wet. Also of note, the summer leading into fall 2019 was the hottest on record for the Northern Hemisphere.

In Iowa, August started out sunny and dry until rainfall exceeding 1.5 inches was recorded in Stanley on the 5th. During the 11th and 12th a low-pressure system moved across Iowa from west to east, producing the largest rainfall amount in Oakland of 2.82 inches. Centerville and Guttenburg also recorded totals of 1–2 inches with this system. From the night of the 17th into the next morning more than 60 stations across the state recorded above one inch of much needed rain. Widespread rain and some stronger thunderstorms on the 20th brought an inch or more to more than 100 stations, varying from 2.00 inches in Eldora to 4.30 inches in Coon Rapids. Similar numbers were reported over the state on the 21st. Low pressure moving in from the south brought showers across eastern Iowa on the 25th, reforming on the 26th to bring more needed rain. Overall, precipitation in August totaled 10.82 inches or 2.89 inches below normal. Severe weather was reported on four days in August producing small tornados, straight-line winds, and hail. The largest tornado was an EF-3 in Lacona on the morning of the 29th, which also produced quarter-size hail in Bloomfield. Abnormally dry conditions covered roughly 35% of the state in August, with eastern and central Iowa having moderate drought conditions by the 13th.

Above-average temperatures and rainfall were produced in September, making it the 9th warmest and 15th wettest in 147 years of statewide records. A total of 23 days were unseasonably warm, ranging from 4°F to 6°F above average. Of note, statewide lows were 6°F to 9°F above normal. The average

warmest day across the state was the 20th, with the coolest period from the 3rd to the 7th. The 15th, 17th, and 18th all tied for the highest temperature, in south-central Iowa, at 93°F. Eastern Iowa reported the most rain, with four to eight inches above average. Dubuque reported 13.99 inches. The largest rain event was on the 9th, when thunderstorms moved from west-central Iowa to the northeast. More than 80 stations reported rainfall of at least an inch with the highest totals in northeastern Iowa. The 18th and 19th saw rain across much of the state with the most in northeastern Iowa. Southern Iowa received its largest rainfall total on the 21st. The 24th through 29th saw showers and thunderstorms either statewide or in various regions of the state with significant rainfall totals in western Iowa on the 24th, southeastern on the 28th, and in southern on the 29th. Severe weather occurred on the 9th with straight-line winds across 22 counties. The highest recorded speed was a 70-mph gust in Colo. More straight-line winds were recorded on the 12th in northeastern Iowa. On the 14th central Iowa received pea to dime-sized hail and straight-line winds. A report of 1.75 inch diameter hail was reported in Holstein and weak tornados were reported in Harrison and Ida counties. The first week of September saw abnormally dry conditions, covering 41% of the state. Central and eastern Iowa were slightly dryer, covering 12% of that area. By the 24th moderate drought conditions were completely removed from the state via increasing rainfall totals.

October saw below average temperatures and above average precipitation. Monthly statewide total precipitation was 4.78 inches, 2.17 inches above normal and the 8th wettest October on record. Unseasonably cold temperatures were recorded between the 10th and the 16th, with northwestern Iowa receiving the first freezing to below freezing recordings on the morning of the 11th. A longer span of unseasonably cold weather was from the 20th to the 31st. Donnellson and Lamoni reported highs of 90°F on the 1st, about 20°F warmer than expected. Above average precipitation was recorded in a band from southwest to northeast. The average snowfall for the month was 2.3 inches, with Swea City reporting two inches on the 12th. From the evening of the 20th into the 21st more than 100 stations reported one inch of rain or more. The evening and nighttime of the 28th produced the first widespread snow event. Measurable snow fell across the southeastern two-thirds of the states with the highest totals in east-central Iowa. Coralville reported 4.2 inches with a statewide average of 1.2 inches. The 30th also produced measurable snow in eastern Iowa, with 3–4 inches in Cedar Rapids, 3.00 inches at Davenport Municipal Airport, and 5.2 inches in Dubuque. Only one day, the 1st, produced widespread severe weather. Shenandoah reported a weak tornado. Polk City reported large hail from quarter to golf ball-sized. Northeastern Iowa reported straight-line winds in the evening.

November followed the October trend of lower average temperatures and precipitation. Temperatures were 6°F below normal in eastern Iowa. The first two weeks of the month were below average in temperature with the coldest stretch from the 10th to the 12th. The 11th was the coldest day of the



month with an average high of 19°F, 29°F below average. Unseasonably warm weather occurred over the last eight days of the month with the 24th seeing temperatures 20°F above normal. The highest temperature recorded for the month was in Little Sioux at 65°F on the 9th or 15°F above normal. The lowest temperature was -8°F at Rockwell City on the 12th, 35°F below normal. Although precipitation totals over the month were below average, above average snowfall occurred across much of the state with the highest in northern Iowa. The statewide average snowfall was 3.8 inches. Significant amounts of snow fell in the state's northern three-quarters on the 6th. The 10th saw snow across much of the state, with most over the central third of the state. Cedar Falls reported 4.8 inches. The 26th saw the first significant low-pressure system, with a mix of rain and snow that progressed to near blizzard conditions in some areas. Estherville Municipal Airport reported 47 mph winds with near whiteout conditions. Northwest and north-central Iowa had the highest snow totals with Sanborn recording 8.6 inches. Severe weather was reported on the 30th over central Iowa. A brief rope tornado was reported near Guthrie Center with no observed damage. Pea-sized hail was reported around the Des Moines Metro area.

#### HABITAT, GENERAL TRENDS

Areas along the Missouri River felt the lasting effects of catastrophic flooding in early spring of 2019, so early fall waterfowl counts at DeSoto NWR were not conducted for the 2019 migration season. Unfortunately, this limits the fall picture of migratory waterfowl in western Iowa.

Available pheasant habitat was at 2.78 million acres (2018 data), the lowest recorded in Iowa history since reliable record keeping started in 1901. The 2019 August DNR roadside survey saw declines since 2018 of 17% for pheasants, 36% for quail, and 37% for partridge.

Data from the fall 2019 Hitchcock hawk watch showed more disturbing results, with several record low counts for common species. Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and Rough-legged Hawk all set record low annual totals (Scott 2020). Northern Harrier produced the second lowest annual total on record. Eleven Golden Eagles tied the second lowest annual total, set last year. Broad-winged Hawk numbers were very low, the third lowest annual total on record. American Kestrel bounced back from the last two year's record low totals. Contrastingly, the Grammer Grove hawk watch conducted a productive 30th year. A total of 6,193 counted raptors was the second highest total ever. On 24 September 1,875 raptors were counted, many of which were Broad-winged Hawks. As documented in several places around the state, this date and the following day produced large numbers of Broad-winged Hawks. There were 3,185 total Broad-winged Hawks counted at Grammer Grove in 2019, the second highest total ever. There were 1,261 total Turkey Vultures counted, nearly doubling the old record of 681.

Red Crossbills were widespread across the state. The species was reported in Woodbury County from September through November. August reports were in Story and Marion counties. Other November reports were in Bremer

and Des Moines counties. The Des Moines County observation came with a recording, which was Ponderosa Pine or type 2 (eBird).

Tundra Swans were more widespread throughout the fall than usual. Aside from hundreds staging in their regular location along the Upper Mississippi River, the northeast quadrant of the state was well-represented as was central Iowa. However, the number of swans along the Missouri flyway was the most impressive. Adjacent counties in eastern Nebraska from the Omaha area north to the Sioux City area had both an impressive number of sightings as well as number of individuals seen.

Central and northern Iowa saw a dearth of sea duck reports. Single reports of Surf Scoter came from Marion and Polk counties. This was the only sea duck species reported in Cerro Gordo and Dickinson counties. Other reports of Surf Scoter came from Black Hawk and Jackson counties. The only White-winged Scoter report was from Johnson County. Black Scoter was only reported in Black Hawk County. Long-tailed Duck was only reported in Linn and Dubuque counties.

There were many reports of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck in addition to the first Iowa breeding record (Silcock 2020). It appears that the species is abruptly expanding its summer range and breeding range into Iowa. Although most of the sightings were close to the Missouri River, it seems that expansion up the Mississippi River is also likely.

## UNUSUAL SPECIES

A total of seven review species were seen during the fall. August heralded Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in both Pottawattamie and Mills counties, the latter yielding the first state breeding record (Silcock 2020). The 6th state record of Yellow-billed Loon was found in Webster County (Dinsmore 2020). Two Fish Crows were observed in Polk County, making that the third straight year for the species in Polk County and four years out of the last six in which it has been reported. September had one unusual species, a Parasitic Jaeger in Marion County. October rounded up the last few rarities, with California Gull and Rock Wren in Polk County, and Gyrfalcon in Pottawattamie County. No unusual species were reported in November.

## SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Casual or Accidental species. \* = documented, ph = photo. County names are in *italics*. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **A** = area, **DMACC** = Des Moines Area Community College, **ELC** = environmental learning corridor, **HHW** = Hitchcock hawk watch, **INHS** = Illinois Natural History Survey, **L** = lake, **L&D** = lock and dam, **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NC** = nature center, **NM** = national monument, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **SF** = state forest, **SI** = slough, **SP** = state park, **SRA** = state recreation area, **W** = wetland, **WDNR** = Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, **WA** = wildlife area.



**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK:** This species continued to extend its breeding range northward with Iowa getting its first confirmed breeding record (Silcock 2020). At least five birds continued 7 Aug at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (\*LJP-ph, \*PDBS-ph, \*AB-ph). On 9 Aug a breeding pair with 10 to 11 ducklings was photographed along Allis Road *Mills* (\*WRS-ph).

**Snow Goose:** The first significant flock totaling 1090 was recorded 29 Oct at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* (HHW). A high count of 8942 and 2nd highest count of 5415 were at Hitchcock NC on 7 Nov and 14 Nov, respectively (HHW).

**Ross's Goose:** A single bird was at Prairie Lakes P *Black Hawk* 13 Oct (DGE). A pair was observed 4 Nov to 30 Nov at the Johnston Public Library ponds *Polk* (TJD, m.ob.).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** A single was at Center Point M *Linn* 24 Aug (JF). The first significant flock was 188 at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 13 Oct (SM). There were 180 reported at Saylorville Res *Polk* 20 Oct (AB). The most was 1200 at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* 16 Nov (BOW, KH).

**Cackling Goose:** The first report was 13 at Tedesco ELC *Story* 20 Oct (CPL). The highest count was 49 at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 10 Nov (SM).

**Trumpeter Swan:** The high count was 189 at Amana Lily Pond *Iowa* 29 Nov (BT).

**Tundra Swan:** There were many reports away from the Mississippi R, which included: 2 in Cedar Falls *Black Hawk* 24 Oct (BLP), one at Marsh Farm W *Dallas* 3 Nov (CW),

3 at Lewis Bottoms *Linn* 5 Nov (BCC), 7 at Amana Lily Pond *Iowa* 6 Nov (LRG), 7 in rural *Woodbury* 8 Nov (BFH), one at Dale Maffitt Res *Dallas* 13 Nov (JG), and one at Le Grand settling ponds *Tama* 22 Nov (SFi). The two highest counts were 544 at Pool 9 *Allamakee* and 874 at Pool 13 *Clinton* on 25 Nov (WDNR).

**Wood Duck:** The most was 135 along Allis Road *Mills* 6 Aug (WRS).

**Blue-winged Teal:** High counts were 1000 at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* 22 Sep (DBr) and 1280 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 22 Sep (AB).

**Northern Shoveler:** Some high counts were 200 at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* on 21 Sep (DBr), 152 at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 12 Oct (AB), 300 at Pool 18 *Des Moines* on 24 Oct (INHS), and 245 at South Twin L *Calhoun* on 24 Oct (SSP).

**Gadwall:** There were 6000 estimated at Pool 18 *Des Moines* 24 Oct (INHS). Numbers shot up to the hundreds at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 12 Oct with 322 (AB), peaking at 1346 on 28 Oct (RLC).



*Trumpeter Swan, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 15 August 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*

**American Wigeon:** The most was 400 estimated at Pool 18 *Des*

*Moines* 28 Oct (INHS).



*American Wigeon, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 22 November 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*

**American Black Duck:** The most was 31 at Pool 9 *Allamakee* 25 Nov (WDNR).

**Northern Pintail:** After a summer with no reports, the first was one at Trumbull L *Clay* 4 Aug (JDJ). High counts at Pool 18 *Des Moines* were 550 on 26 Sep, 1500 on 24 Oct, and 800 on 28 Oct (INHS). Numbers peaked around Saylorville Res *Polk* at 170 on 27 Oct (AB).

**Green-winged Teal:** A single, likely late summer bird was along Allis Road *Mills* 1 Aug (WRS). Towards peak migration, estimates of 500 were reported at Pool 18 *Des Moines* on 24 Oct, 14 Nov, and 25 Nov (all INHS). Numbers peaked around Saylorville Res *Polk* with 610 on 2 Nov (AB).

**Canvasback:** There were 25,981 at Pool 9 *Allamakee* 28 Oct (WDNR). There were 13,000 estimated at Pool 19 *Lee* 14 Nov (INHS).

**Redhead:** Numbers peaked at 273 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 9 Nov (AB).

**Ring-necked Duck:** High counts included 1382 at Pool 13 *Clinton* 28 Oct and 5700 at Pool 18 *Des Moines* 5 Nov (INHS). Away from the Mis-

issippi R, 535 was a peak at Saylorville Res *Polk* 2 Nov (AB).

**Greater Scaup:** The first were 2 at Cedar L *Linn* on 28 Oct (BCC, JE). Three were at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 9 Nov (AB). A single bird was reported 18–23 Nov on DMACC Campus *Polk* (SSP, m.ob.).

**Lesser Scaup:** Aerial surveys estimated 4280 at Pool 9 *Allamakee* and 2200 at Pool 13 *Clinton* on 25 Nov (WDNR) and 10,300 at Pool 18 *Des Moines* 5 Nov (INHS). In central Iowa, a peak of 2500 was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 31 Oct (RLC).

**Surf Scoter:** The first was one at Red Rock Res *Marion* 8 Oct (JF). One or 2 were at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 20–29 Oct (RGo, CJF). A single was at Big Spirit L *Dickinson* 29 Oct (ET). A single was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 1 Nov (RJT). Another single was at Prairie Lakes P *Black Hawk* 5–16 Nov (AKO, m.ob.).

**White-winged Scoter:** All: 6 at Coralville Res *Johnson* 28 Oct (BCC).

**Black Scoter:** All: one at Prairie Lakes P *Black Hawk* 6–10 Nov (AKO, m.ob.).

**Long-tailed Duck:** A single was at Pool 11 *Dubuque* 11 Nov (TM). This bird likely continued 11–21 Nov at A.Y. McDonald P *Dubuque* (Kristin and John Anderson-Bricker, DAS, m.ob.). A single was at Cedar L *Linn* 23–30 Nov, staying three days into the winter (JE, JF, m.ob.).

**Bufflehead:** The first were 4 along I-35 *Cerro Gordo* 30 Sep (Glen Lindeman and Jean Greenhalgh). On 25 Nov there were 2171 at Pool 9 *Allamakee* and 1641 at Pool 13 *Clinton* (WDNR). At Pool 19 *Lee* there were 2250 on 14 Nov and 1110 on 25 Nov

(INHS). Away from the Mississippi R, a peak of 75 was at Big Creek SP *Polk* and 28 were at Saylorville Res *Polk*, both 11 Nov (AB).

**Common Goldeneye:** The first report was one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 21 Oct (TJD). Along the Mississippi R, a peak of 3000 was at Ft. Madison *Lee* 20 Nov (INHS). There were 2276 at Pool 9 *Allamakee* and 1150 at Pool 13 *Clinton* (WDNR), both 25 Nov. Away from the Mississippi R, a peak of 223 was at Red Rock Res *Marion* 24 Nov (AB).

**Hooded Merganser:** The most was 163 on 11 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**Common Merganser:** The first was one at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 31 Oct (KH). The most was 1550 around Saylorville Res *Polk* 28 Nov (AB).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** The first were 3 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 1 Nov (RLC). The peak was 62 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 6 Nov (RLC).

**Ruddy Duck:** There were 397 at Pool 13 *Clinton* 28 Oct (WDNR). At Pool 19 *Lee*, 2300 were estimated on 5 Nov and 25 Nov (INHS). Away from the Mississippi R, 265 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* 20 Oct (AB). Numbers at Saylorville Res held in the hundreds until 30 Oct, when 290 were present (RLC). There were 225 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 4 Nov (Dylan Beyer). The last report of more than 50 was 69 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 18 Nov (NKO).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Reported in eight counties. Two reports were north of I-80. A solid description of 8 birds 18 Oct along Orange Avenue *Monona* is the only report appreciably north of I-80 (JC). Reports in six

counties along or south of I-80 were highlighted by 6, including 3 young, at Kish-Ke-Kosh Prairie *Jasper* 9 Aug (KVS). The high count was 22 around Fairfield *Jefferson* 28 Oct (TMC). The 2019 quail statewide index was 0.86 birds/route, which matches the 10-year average. These numbers contrast with the previous four years, which had the highest collective index in the last 20 years.

**Gray Partridge:** Reported in nine counties, all north of I-80. A pair stayed at a specific spot at the edge of a sod farm along Deal Road *Linn* 10–24 Aug (BCC, m.ob.). An adult or 2 with 8 young were along Dugan Avenue *Buchanan* 20 Aug (WV). Gray Partridge were counted at 1.3 birds per 30 miles. These estimates were 27% below the 10-year average and 64% below the long-term. The northeast, north-central, and central regions reported the best 2019 partridge densities.

**Ruffed Grouse:** No reports.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** The last fledglings were reported at Master-son WA *Hamilton* 30 Aug (TMH). The peak migratory concentration was 84 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 28 Oct (RLC).

**Horned Grebe:** The first migrants were 2 at Martin L *Black Hawk* 13 Sep (DGE). The most was 15 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 30 Oct (KH).

**Red-necked Grebe:** A nice fall with reports from seven counties. An adult with fledgling was reported 9 Aug at Dewey's Pasture WA *Clay* (RJT, TJD, DCH). There were 2 adults and 2 fledglings at Grovers L *Dickinson* 11 Aug (DCH). There were 2 at the Forest City settling



ponds *Hancock* 21 Sep (RGo). Singles were at L Macbride SP *Johnson* 17 Oct (RGo), Effigy Mounds NM *Allamakee* 26 Oct (DGE), Brinker L *Black Hawk* 31 Oct (TGS, WV) to 1 Nov (AKO), Coralville Res *Johnson* 28 Oct (JF), Gray's L *Polk* from 5–6 Nov (AB, m.ob.), and Saylorville Res *Polk* 6 Nov (RLC).

**Eared Grebe:** The first report was one at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* 22 Aug (JDM). The peak number was 3 at both Big Creek WA *Polk* (AB) and Saylorville Res *Polk* 13 Oct (AB), both believed to be separate sightings by the observer.

**Western Grebe:** A nice fall with reports from six counties. The last report on breeding grounds was 2 at Dewey's Pasture WA *Clay* 8 Aug (RJT, TJD). All other reports away from breeding areas: one at Red Rock Res *Marion* 24 Sep (JF) followed by 2 on 27 Oct (JJD, SJD) at the same location, one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 25 Oct to 12 Nov (MP, m.ob.), one at L&D 11 *Dubuque* 29 Oct (TM), 2 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 31 Oct (KH), one at Gray's L *Polk* 4–11 Nov (JB, m.ob.).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Sightings in the northeast included: one in Cresco *Howard* 3 Aug (Jim Peterson), 2 from 18–24 Nov at L Meyer P *Winneshiek* (LR). The most was 88 at Brenton Feedlot *Dallas* 9 Nov (AB).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** The two last reports were one at Saulsbury Bridge RA *Muscatine* 24 Oct (KJM) and one at Lake Macbride SP *Johnson* 25 Oct (MHB).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** The last was a late report of one at Goose Lake WA *Clinton* 14 Oct (TM).

**Common Nighthawk:** Some migratory pulses were 50 in *Marion* Linn 19 Aug (BCC), 25 in Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 1 Sep (Missy Bowen), 31 in *Fairfield Jefferson* 15 Sep (JJo), 28 at Sleepy Hollow Access *Story* 15 Sep (SSP), 69 at Graceland Park Cemetery *Woodbury* 18 Sep (GLV), and 35 near Hills *Johnson* 20 Sep (AC). The last was one in Cedar Rapids *Linn* 16 Oct (BT).

**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** The last was one singing at Sand Creek WA *Decatur* the evening of 30 Aug into the morning of 1 Sep (KTM).

**Chimney Swift:** The last was one at Water Works P *Polk* 17 Oct (JB).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** The last was one in Iowa City *Johnson* 27 Oct (JPa).

**Virginia Rail:** The last was one at Cowles Commons *Polk* 25 Sep (Diane Dentlinger).

**Sora:** The last was one at South Twin L *Calhoun* 24 Oct (SSP).

**Common Gallinule:** The last two reports were 2 at Green Island WA *Jackson* 22 Sep (JM) and one at Otter Creek Marsh WA *Tama* 29 Sep (J. Wawashkeshi).

**American Coot:** Statewide, numbers of 1000 or more were reported from 12 Oct to 11 Nov. The most was roughly 5000 at Green Island WA *Jackson* 25 Oct (TM).

**Sandhill Crane:** The most was the second to last report, which was 58 at Cone Marsh WA *Louisa* 24 Nov (HL). The last were 14 at the same location 29 Nov (JKe).

**Whooping Crane:** An adult from the Wisconsin experimental population was reported in a pasture

northeast of Buffalo Center *Winnebago* 15-31 Aug (RGo, CW, JB).

**Black-necked Stilt:** All: 7 were along Allis Road *Mills* 6-17 Aug (WRS, AB, SJD).

**American Avocet:** Reports were scattered widely across the state from 12 counties. There were 25 in Dubuque *Dubuque* 27 Aug (DAS, TM). Between one and 25 were at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 5 Aug to 19 Sep (JF, BCC, CRE, TM, LQ). There were 50 along 145th Street *Pottawattamie* 15-16 Sep (SM). Between 4 and a seasonal high count of 53 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* 23 Sep to 13 Oct (RLC, BE, AB, DTh, RJT, TJD). There were 16 at Hendrickson Marsh WA *Story* 12 Oct (EEO). The last report was 21 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 27 Oct (KH).



*American Avocets, Maskunkya Marsh, Mahaska, 22 September 2019. Photograph by Diane Crookham-Johnson, Oskaloosa, IA.*

**Black-bellied Plover:** All: one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 10 Aug (AB, RJT, TJD), one at Legacy WA *Hardin* 17 Aug (TM), 2 at Green Acres sod farm *Dallas* 18 Aug (AB, JB), one at Red Rock Res *Marion* 24 Aug (DWa, TW, JDJ), one at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 30 Aug (JF), and one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 6 Oct (AB).

**American Golden-Plover:**

All: one at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 11 Aug (JF), one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 23 Aug (RJT), one at Red Rock Res *Marion* 24-25 (m. ob.), 7 to 8 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 25-30 Aug, one at Little Swan L *Dickinson* 27 Aug (JDJ), one near Packwood *Jefferson* 1 Sep, one in Cedar Rapids *Linn* 21 Sep, 5 at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* 26 Sep, 8 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 28 Sep (TGS), one in rural *Pottawattamie* 19 Oct (KH).

**Semipalmated Plover:** The first was 3 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 2 Aug (AB). Between 15 and 17 were at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 3-4 Aug (BT, MDR). Between 27 and 40 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* 2-3 Sep. The last was one at the same location 8 Sep (RLC).

**Killdeer:** The most away from summer months was 70 at Big Creek SP *Polk* 25 Oct (RLC). The last was one at Cone Marsh *Louisa* 24 Nov (HL).

**Upland Sandpiper:** Reported in 12 counties. The most was 8 at the Deal Road sod farm *Linn* 10-24 Aug (BCC). The last was one at the University of Northern Iowa campus prairie *Black Hawk* 14 Sep (Chandler Dolan).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** All: one near Sandhill L *Woodbury* 6 Aug (GLV), 26 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 18 Aug (JF).

**Marbled Godwit:** All: 6 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 9 Sep (Joe Mize *fide* SJD).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** No reports, despite one reported late July (Dinsmore 2019).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** The high count was 59 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 14 Sep (AB), far fewer than the 228

found in late July (Dinsmore 2019). There were 2 found along Sumac Road *Pottawattamie* 16 Sep (KH), which was the last sighting.

**Sanderling:** Reported in eight counties. There were 12 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 30 Aug (MP), which was a peak. The last 2 were at the same place 22 Sep (AB).

**Dunlin:** All: 6 at M.U. Payne WA *Fremont* 8 Oct (Jerry Ledbetter), 2 near Crescent *Pottawattamie* 18 Oct (SLe), one at Red Rock Res *Marion* 9 Nov (DW).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Reported in 10 counties. There were 13 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 15 Aug (BCC, DAS). The high was 16 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 7 Sep (AB). The last report of 3 was near Crescent *Pottawattamie* 18 Oct (SLe).

**Least Sandpiper:** Reported in 25 counties. The high was 130 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 7 Sep (AB). The last was one at Cedar L *Linn* 10 Oct (BMW, JE).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** All: one adult at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 10 Aug (JF), one adult, missing much of its right leg, at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 30 Aug (BCC, JF), one at Little Swan L *Dickinson* 2 Sep (JDJ).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Reported in six counties. The high was 5 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 24 Aug (JDG, DWa, TW). There were 4 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 3 Sep (JG). The last were 2 in *Pottawattamie* 15 Sep (SM).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Notable peaks included a high of 970 Saylorville Res *Polk* 11 Aug (AB) and 720 there 2 Sep (AB). The last report was 4 near Crescent *Pottawattamie* 18

Oct (SLe).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** The high was 72 at Little Swan L *Dickinson* 2 Sep (JDJ). The last sighting was 32 at the same location 28 Sep (JDJ).

**Western Sandpiper:** All: one juvenile at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 30 Aug (BCC), 4 at Little Swan L *Dickinson* 2 Sep (LAS, JDJ), one at Trumbull L *Clay* 2 Sep (LAS, JDJ).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** All: one was at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 3 Aug (MDR), as many as 2 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* 10–22 Aug (RJT, AB), one was just south of Iowa City *Johnson* 14 Aug (JM), one was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 22 Aug (KH), and up to 4 were at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 29–30 Aug (JM, BCC, TM).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** The first were 3 at Little Swan L *Dickinson* 28 Sep (JDJ). Four were at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 7 Oct (Dean Hester). The last were 5 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 24 Oct (DW).

**American Woodcock:** Reported in nine counties. A notable sighting was 3 flying around before sunrise at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 15 Aug (BCC, DAS).

**Wilson's Snipe:** Reported in 22 counties. High was 11 at Green Island WA *Jackson* 26 Oct (Ethan Brown).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Reported in 35 counties. The last was one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 25 Oct (MP).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** The most was 14 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JM). The last was one at L Macbride *Johnson* 16 Sep (BCC).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Reported in 23 counties. The most was 50 at Say-



lorville Res *Polk* 18 Aug (AB). The last was 2 at Cedar L *Linn* 25 Oct (BCC).

**Willet:** No reports.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** The most was 17 at Trumbull L *Clay* 2 Sep (JDJ) followed by 16 at Little Swan L *Dickinson* the same day (JDJ). The last was along Red Oak Road *Allamakee* 18 Nov (BCC).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Reported in three counties. One to 4 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* 3 Aug (RJT) to the latest sighting on 8 Sep (RLC).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** Reported in eight counties. The first was 3 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 3 Aug (RJT). The most was 29 at the same location 6 Sep (DTh). The last was one at Union Hills WA *Cerro Gordo* 7 Oct (RGo).

**PARASITIC JAEGER:** A single was found at Red Rock Res *Marion* 18 Sep (\*JF-ph), where it continued the next day (\*MP-ph).

**Sabine's Gull:** The first was one juvenile 13 Sep at Ada Hayden P *Story*, a first county record (SJD). There were 1–7 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 15–29 Sep (SJD, AB, JF, BCC, RJT, JG). Five juveniles were at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 19 Sep (KH). An adult in alternate plumage stayed at Cedar L *Linn* 18–24 Oct (JF, m.ob.).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** The first were 3–5 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 1–4 Aug (MHB, JM). Up to 30 were at Big Creek SP *Polk* 21 Oct to 9 Nov (BMW, m. ob.). The most was 100 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 21 Oct (AS). The last was 3 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 18 Nov (NKO).

**Laughing Gull:** All: one juvenile at Coralville Res *Johnson* 5 Sep

(JF), one second basic at Red Rock Res *Marion* 8–29 Sep (SJD); one juvenile/first basic at Coralville Res *Johnson* 19 Sep (JF), one juvenile at Saylorville Res *Polk* 21 Sep (AB, CW, RJT), one second basic at Deere Dike *Dubuque* 23 Sep (DAS); one first basic at *Dubuque* River Walk *Dubuque* 4 Oct (KJA).

**Franklin's Gull:** At Saylorville Res *Polk* numbers peaked at 23,500 on 7 Oct (BE) and were still strong at 16,000 on 20 Oct (AB). There were 18,500 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 12 Oct (AB), 2900 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 19 Oct (AB), and 2300 at Rathbun Res *Appanoose* 23 Oct (TNJ). The last was one at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 18 Nov (Nicole Koeltzow).

**CALIFORNIA GULL:** An adult was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 5 Oct (\*SJD).

**Herring Gull:** The first was at Harbor Sandbar *Dubuque* 7 Sep (TM).

**Iceland Gull:** Reported in four counties. The first was a juvenile at Saylorville Res *Polk* 13 Oct (AB). The next was a juvenile at Red Rock Res *Marion* 24 Oct (JF). The following day there was one at Cedar L *Linn* (JF). Reports of singles were pretty much steady throughout the rest of the fall at Saylorville and Red Rock. On the Mississippi R, 2 were at the *Dubuque* River Walk *Dubuque* 5 Nov (DAS, TM).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** All: a presumed adult at West Okoboji L *Dickinson* 28 Sep (JDJ), a juvenile/first basic at Saylorville Res *Polk* 29 Sep (AB), an adult and a first basic at the *Dubuque* River Walk *Dubuque* 3 Oct (TM, DAS), an adult/third ba-

sic at Cedar L *Linn* 15 Oct to 2 Nov (JF m.ob.), a third basic at Saylorville Res *Polk* 20 Oct (RLC), a first basic at Pat and Jack Bush Overlook *Scott* 29 Oct (SMF), a first basic at Dubuque River Walk *Dubuque* 8 Nov (TM), an adult at Harbor Sandbar *Dubuque* 22 Nov (TM), and an adult at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* 29 Nov (Melinda Houtman)

**Glaucous Gull:** All: one at Coralville Res *Johnson* 12 Nov (JF), one at Cedar L *Linn* 17–30 Nov (JF, m.ob.), one at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 24 Nov (KH).

**Least Tern:** No reports.

**Caspian Tern:** The most was 27 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 8 Sep (AB). The last was one at Nahant M *Scott* 28 Sep (FSS).

**Black Tern:** The most was 32 at Little Swan L *Dickinson* 4 Aug (JDJ). The last was one at Green Island WA *Jackson* 22 Sep (JM).

**Common Tern:** The first one arrived at Ventura Marsh WA *Cerro Gordo* 27 Aug (RGo). This was followed by 2 at Trickle Sl *Dickinson* 2 Sep (LAS, JDJ). The last two reports were one at Spirit L *Dickinson* 5 Oct and 6 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 27 Oct, which tied the 2nd latest date (RLC).

**Forster's Tern:** The most was 42 at Red Rock Res *Marion* on 15 Sep (AB). The last was one at Cedar L *Linn* 5–6 Nov, which on the second day of its stay tied the 3rd latest date (BCC, JE).

**Red-throated Loon:** All: one at Red Rock Res *Marion* 27 Oct (TGS), one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 1 Nov (RJT, DCH), and one at Red Rock Res *Marion* 19 Nov (JF).

**Pacific Loon:** All: one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 12 Oct (RLC), one at

Cedar L *Linn* 19–20 Oct (JF, BCC, m.ob.).

**Common Loon:** The first was one at Big Spirit L *Dickinson* 8 Aug (LAS). A single bird in basic plumage spent 12 Aug through 23 Sep in the company of a Yellow-billed Loon at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* (SJD, m.ob.). This particular bird was likely there prior to the early date. The peak was 45 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 6 Nov (RLC). The last were one at L&D 13 *Clinton* and one on the Mississippi R in Bettendorf *Scott*, both on 28 Nov (JF).

**YELLOW-BILLED LOON:** A subadult spent 12 Aug through 30 Sep in the company of a Common Loon at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* (\*SJD-ph, \*AB-ph, \*CW-ph, \*GDW-ph, \*MHB-ph, \*JB-ph, \*TMH-ph, \*HZ-ph, m.ob.). This was the 6th record for Iowa and the second from summer (Dinsmore 2020).

**Neotropic Cormorant:** All: one juvenile at Saylorville Res *Polk* 25 Aug (SJD).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** The high count was 4500 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 12 Oct (RLC), which coincided well with a high count of 449 at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 13 Oct (HHW).

**American White Pelican:** Numbers started ramping up with 1350 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 14 Sep (AB). At Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 3048 was a high count on 22 Sep (HHW). There were 2355 at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* (LGR, LQ, EA, Donna Warner).

**American Bittern:** The last was one at Errington Marsh WA *Polk* 27 Oct (DyO).

**Least Bittern:** All: one at Green

Island WA *Jackson* 1 Aug (TM), one at Masterson WA *Hamilton* 22 Aug (KH), one at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* 27 Aug (JDJ), and one at Dewey's Pasture WA *Clay* 2 Sep (JDJ).

**Great Egret:** Numbers peaked at 176 at Green Island WA *Jackson* 22 Aug (TM). Numbers at this location remained high until late September, with 80 reported 22 Sep (JM). The last report was one near Keokuk *Lee* 16 Nov (Stefanie Paeg).

**Snowy Egret:** All: one was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 14–22 Sep (AB, m.ob.), one at L Macbride *Johnson* 15–19 Oct (JF, m.ob.),

**Cattle Egret:** Reported in 12 counties. There were 11 north of Bartlett *Mills* 16 Aug (Gail Fennell). There were 3 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 14 Sep (SJD, m.ob.). A high of 16 was at Rapp P *Page* 7 Oct (J Laughlin). The last report was one at St. Mary's Island WA *Mills* 31 Oct (JJD).

**Green Heron:** The last was one at Martin L *Black Hawk* 6 Oct (DGE).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** All: one at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 9 Aug (JF), one at Cedar L *Linn* 13



*American White Pelicans, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 8 November 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*

Aug (JF), one along Allis Road *Mills* 14 Aug (SM), 5 at Trumbull L *Clay* 2 Sep (LAS, JDJ), 2 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 4 Sep (SMF) with one at the same location 13 Sep (JAI, JTi), one along Allis Road *Mills* 19 Oct (AB).



*Great Egrets, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 8 November 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*

**Yellow-crowned Night Heron:** All: one juvenile at Ada Hayden P *Story* 2 Sep (SJD).

**White-faced Ibis:** All: one was at L Macbride *Johnson* 15–16 Oct (JF, m.ob.) and one north of Westfield *Plymouth* 31 Oct (JJD).

***Plegadis* species:** All: 1 on 11 Oct at Eagle Flats WA *Hancock* (TJ Herrick *fide* SJD), 2 at Bays Branch WA *Guthrie* 22–23 Oct (Jeremy King and Scott Rolfes *fide* SJD), and 4 at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* 24 Oct (GLV).

**Turkey Vulture:** There were 254 at Coralville Res *Johnson* 20 Sep (LGR). A total of 271 were observed at Hitchcock NC *Pottawatamie* 20 Sep, with the last observed there 28 Oct. At Grammer Grove hawk watch *Marshall*, 848 were observed in October, around 67% of the



season total. The 1261 total Turkey Vultures counted at Grammer Grove nearly doubled the old record of 681. The last was one on 16 Nov at the University of Iowa Research Campus *Johnson* (LGR).

**Osprey:** Reported in 35 counties. There were 16 reported at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* on both 21 Sep and 22 Sep, with 50% of the season total passing by during the 9-day period 16–24 Sep. At Grammer Grove hawk watch *Marshall*, 24 of the season total 25 were observed in September. The last was one at Big Creek SP *Polk* 14 Oct (DTh).

**Golden Eagle:** At Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 11 tied the 2nd-lowest total, set last year. Four were seen in October and 7 in November. The first was one on 20 Oct (HHW). At Grammer Grove hawk watch *Marshall*, one was seen 3 Dec (MP). Outside the hawk watches, a juvenile was seen north of Burlington *Des Moines* on both 27 Oct (BW<sub>i</sub>) and 24 Nov (BW<sub>i</sub>). A juvenile was seen 26 Oct in *Pocahontas* (ET). Another juvenile was seen along I-29 *Pottawattamie* 18 Nov (KH).

**Northern Harrier:** The 105



*Northern Harrier, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 23 November 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*

counted at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* was the 2nd-lowest total on

record (HHW). During 11–27 Oct, 50% of the season total passed by at Hitchcock. In October, 20 of the season total 28 were seen at Grammer Grove *Marshall* (MP).

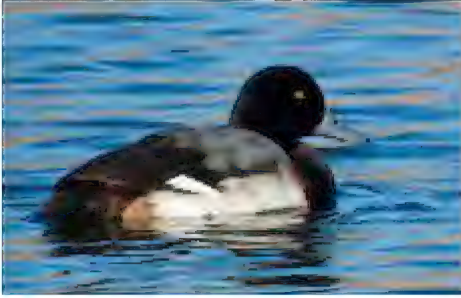
**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** The first was 31 Aug at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS). There were 17 seen at Grammer Grove *Marshall* 25 Sep (LGR, LQ). At Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie*, 219 was a new record low as compared to a high of 1273 in 2009 (HHW). During 6–27 Oct, 50% of the season total passed by.

**Cooper's Hawk:** At Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie*, 60% of the season total was counted in October (HHW). At Grammer Grove hawk watch *Marshall* 45 were counted in September and 35 in October out of a season total of 80 (MP).

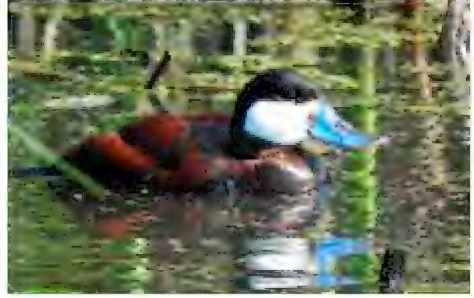
**Northern Goshawk:** Four individuals were counted at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie*: one on 7 Oct, 3 during the 5-day span 21–25 Oct (HHW).

**Bald Eagle:** Reported widely over the state. There were 17 observed at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 27 Oct (SM) and 29 at the same location 10 Nov (SM). Hitchcock set a record low season total of 374, compared to the record high of 1153 set in 2011 (HHW). At Hitchcock, 50% of the season total passed by during the three week period of 6–27 Nov. As many as 29 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* 16 Nov (AB, DCH). There were 42 at L Sugema *Van Buren* 20 Nov (TMC).

**Mississippi Kite:** All: 1–2 were seen in both the Terra P *Polk* (JB, RLC) and West Des Moines area *Polk* (PJW) 3–26 Aug. Two on 1 Sep and one on 8 Sep were at Hitchcock



*Greater Scaup, Ankeny, Polk, 22 November 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Ruddy Duck, Winnebago, 20 August 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Common Nighthawk, Brushy Creek State Recreation Area, Webster, 23 September 2019. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Ogden, Boone, 16 September 2019. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*



*Great Blue Heron, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 8 November 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*





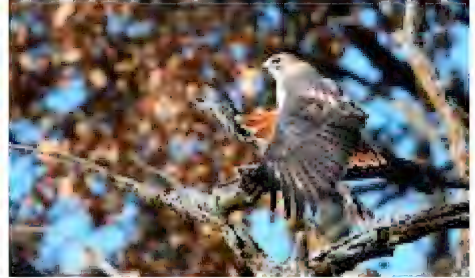
*Green Heron, Twelve Mile Creek Lake, Union, 14 September 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Broad-winged Hawk, Madrid, Boone, 1 September 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Warbling Vireo, Boone, 24 August 2019. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Red-tailed Hawk, Dale Maffit Reservoir, Polk, 7 November 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*



*Hairy Woodpecker, Ledges State Park, Boone, 23 September 2019. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*





*Red-eyed Vireo, Boone, 24 August 2019. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Swainson's Thrush, Boone, 2 September 2019. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*American Pipit, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 4 November 2019. Photograph by Tom Dougherty, Urbandale, IA.*



*American Goldfinches, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 31 October 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*



*American Tree Sparrow, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 11 November 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*



*Summer Tanager, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion, 24 August 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Song Sparrow, Spring Run Wildlife Area, Dickinson, 6 October 2019. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Bobolink, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Johnson, 1 August 2019. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Common Yellowthroat, Boone, 7 September 2019. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Yellow-rumped Warbler, Spring Run Wildlife Area, Dickinson, 6 October 2019. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Black-throated Blue Warbler, Ledges State Park, Boone, 4 September 2019. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*

NC *Pottawattamie*.

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** At Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* there was a season total of 4 individuals, all in September (HHW). At Grammer Grove hawk watch *Marshall* one was recorded in September, while 7 of the 8 season total were recorded in October (MP).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** The season total at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* was 365, the 3rd-lowest total on record (HHW). During the 4-day period 22–25 Sep, 70% of all birds passed by. A high of 85 was 22 Sep, with the last a single 12 Oct. Grammer Grove hawk watch *Marshall* had a banner year for the species. All 3155 were recorded in September, the 2nd-highest total ever (MP). The day of 23 Sep was nearing the peak for the species, with 440 at Red Rock Res *Marion* (BCC) and 432 at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* (LGR, LQ). The high count was 709 at Grammer Grove *Marshall* 25 Sep (LGR, LQ).

**Swainson's Hawk:** At Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* the season total was a low 148, but not near the 23 in 2015 or the 61 in 2017 (HHW). On 11 Oct, 89 were counted, which was 60% of the season total. The first were 2 on 22 Sep and the last were 2 on 22 Oct. At Grammer Grove hawk watch *Marshall* 3 were seen in September and 6 in October (MP).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** A new record low total of 1197 was set at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie*, compared to the record high of 4426 in 2005 (HHW). At Grammer Grove hawk watch *Marshall* 353 of the 486 total were seen in October (MP).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** A new record low total of 8 was set at Hitch-

cock NC *Pottawattamie*, compared to the record high of 59 in 2003. The first was one on 11 Oct (HHW). At Grammer Grove hawk watch *Marshall* 3 were seen in November and 4 in December (MP).

**Long-eared Owl:** All: one at Martin L *Black Hawk* 16 Nov (DH), one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 24 Nov (DCH, AB, CW, RJT).

**Short-eared Owl:** All: 2–4 were at Owego W *Woodbury* 7–23 Nov (AH, POR, RWR).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** At the Hitchcock banding station *Pottawattamie*, 29 were banded over the course of the fall (JT). A single was at Martin L *Black Hawk* 11–13 Nov (AKO, KCR). Another single was at Moorehead Pioneer P *Ida* 17 Nov (MWe). The last report was one at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* 19 Nov (MP, AS).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** A high count of 112 at Hitchcock hawk watch *Pottawattamie* occurred 15 Sep (HHW).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** The last was one at a yard in Polk City *Polk* 28 Nov (Jessa McCauley).

**Northern Flicker:** The most was 20 at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* 28 Sep (EEO).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** The one sighting on the western side of the state was one at Dorothy Pecauc NC *Woodbury* 21 Nov (Alex Rossi).

**American Kestrel:** At Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie*, 73 was a slight recovery from the last two years' record low totals (HHW). At Grammer Grove hawk watch *Marshall* 15 were seen in September and 12 in October out of 28 total (MP).

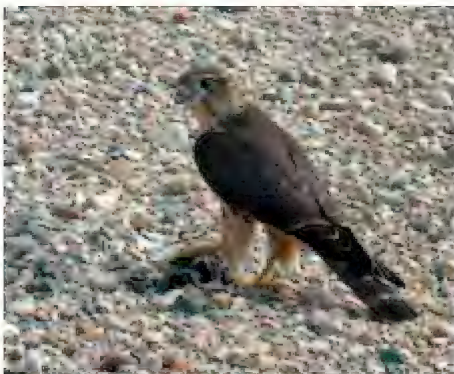
**Merlin:** At Hitchcock NC *Pot-*





*American Kestrel, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 18 October 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*

*tawattamie* 32 was a bit under the average. The first was one on 4 Sep (HHW). At Grammer Grove hawk watch *Marshall* 5 were seen in September and 7 in October (MP).



*Merlin, Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, Kossuth, 15 September 2019. Photograph by Paul Hertzell, Mason City, IA.*

**GYRFALCON:** A gray morph juvenile female was captured by Jerry Toll at the annual raptor banding operation at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 31 Oct (\*JT-ph, Toll 2020).

**Peregrine Falcon:** At Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 80 was above the average of 53. During the 9-day period 21–29 Sep 50% of the season total was counted. The last was one on 12 Oct (HHW). At Grammer Grove

hawk watch *Marshall*, 9 were seen in September and 3 in October (MP).

**Prairie Falcon:** All: There was one at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 2 Nov (HHW).

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** The last was one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 23 Sep (SCS).

**Western Kingbird:** The last was one at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* 5 Sep (DSi).

**Eastern Kingbird:** Lists of 40 or more appeared in late August, waning out in early September. There were 42 at L Macbride SP *Johnson* 24 Aug (MHB). The next day there were 60 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC). Fifty were at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* 2 Sep (PF) and 40 were at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 4 Sep (SMF). The last was one near Audubon *Audubon* 25 Sep (DAK).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** All: one at Ledges SP *Boone* 20 Aug (TMC, JJo).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** The first was one at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* 16 Aug (Frank Fabbro). The last was one at Graceland P Cemetery *Woodbury* 3 Oct (BFH, RTo).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** The last one was at a Polk City yard *Polk* 12 Oct (AB), and was eventually killed by a Sharp-shinned Hawk.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Reported in 16 counties. The first was one at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* 19 Aug (SMF). The last was one at a Dubuque yard *Dubuque* 20 Sep (TM).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Reported in nine counties. The last reports were one at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* 30 Aug (WRS) and 2 at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* 2 Sep (CH).

**Alder Flycatcher:** Reported in five counties. The first was one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 8 Aug (SCS). The last report was the peak with 6 at Terra P *Polk* 1 Sep (SCS, KVS).

**Willow Flycatcher:** The last was one at Winegar L *Benton* 11 Sep (WV).

**Least Flycatcher:** The first was one at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* 18 Aug (James Muller). The last was one in Iowa City *Johnson* 1 Oct (JPa).

**Eastern Phoebe:** The last was one particularly late individual in Cedar Falls *Black Hawk* 17 Nov (DGE).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** All: one near Amana *Iowa* 14 Aug (JF) and one at Saylorville WA *Dallas* 21 Oct (RLC).

**Northern Shrike:** Reported in 13 counties. The first was at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 27–28 Oct (WV, BCC).

**White-eyed Vireo:** All: one at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 7 Sep (JM).

**Bell's Vireo:** Reported from 10 counties. The last report was at Gray Eagle Wildlife Preserve *Wapello* 11 Sep (TMC).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** The last was one at Woodpecker Single Track bike trail *Johnson* 6 Oct (BWi).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** The first was one at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* 23 Aug (DGE). The most was 4 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 23 Sep (SCS) and 4 in Altoona *Polk* 6 Oct (UDG). The last was one at Squaw Creek P *Linn* 23 Oct (AH).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** The first was one at Eagle Point P *Dubuque* 21 Aug (TM). The most was 4 the next day at Green Island WA *Jackson* (TM). The last was one at Hawkeye

WA *Johnson* 12 Oct (JM).

**Warbling Vireo:** The two latest were one at Winegar L *Benton* 22 Sep (WV) and one at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* 23 Sep (MHB).



Warbling Vireo, Boone, 25 August 2019. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Numbers around the peak included 20 at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* 7 Sep (DH), 18 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 8 Sep (RLC) and 15 there the next day (RLC). There were 16 at Brown's Woods *Polk* 14 Sep (RJT). The last double-digit report was 10 at Woodpecker Single Track bike trail *Johnson* 18 Sep (BWi). The last was one at Nahant M *Scott* 20 Oct (FSS).

**Blue Jay:** The first count approaching 50 was 46 at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* 23 Sep (MHB). There were 97 at Iowa State University *Story* 26 Sep (CPL). Another 90 were reported heading south the same day at a private residence *Pottawattamie* (Dominique De Caprona). There were 50 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 28 Sep (BMW) and 75 at Brenton Arboretum *Dallas* (JB) the same day. There were 71 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 30 Sep (SCS), 73 at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* 4 Oct (JJo), 61 at Mines of Spain SRA

*Dubuque* 6 Oct (KJA), and 60 at Big Wall L *Wright* (LGR) the same day. At Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie*, numbers began mounting with 176 on 13 Oct (SM) and the hawk watch season high count of 498 on 22 Oct (HHW).

**Black-billed Magpie:** All: one west of Correctionville flying over the Little Sioux R *Woodbury* 24 Oct (LAS).

**FISH CROW:** There were 1–2 birds from 31 Aug–6 Oct (\*SJD, \*JB, \*AB, \*TJD, RJT).

**Bank Swallow:** The last were 12 in rural *Washington* 15 Sep (FB).

**Tree Swallow:** Numbers peaked with a low estimate of 5000 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 30 Sep (BCC) to 4 Oct (BCC, DH). There were 800 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 6 Oct (AB), 720 at L Macbride *Johnson* 12 Oct (MDR), and 500 at Rathbun Res *Appanoose* 12 Oct (RLC). On 20 Oct there were 500 at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). The last were 4 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 27 Oct (JM).

**Purple Martin:** The most was 330 in rural *Dallas* 18 Aug (AB). The last was one at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* 14 Sep (DTh).

**Barn Swallow:** Some of the last were 3 at Errington M *Polk* 17 Oct (RLC, SCS), one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 20 Oct, and 5 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 21 Oct (KH).

**Cliff Swallow:** The last were 20 seen right before an incoming storm in Brandon *Buchanan* 9 Sep (WV).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Reported from 17 counties. The first was one in Traer *Tama* 20 Aug (Benjamin Baker). One was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 2 Sep (AB). On 7 Sep one was at L Macbride *Johnson* (MHB) and

2 were at Sweet Marsh WA *Bremer* (MWe). There was one at Pictured Rocks P *Jones* 8 Sep (DWa, TW). The most was 4 in Waverly *Bremer* 23 Oct (MWe).



*Rock Wren, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 26 October 2019. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

**ROCK WREN:** A bird was heard singing and then photographed on 26 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (\*SJD-ph, \*JJD).

**House Wren:** The last was one at a yard in Brandon *Buchanan* 15 Oct (WV).

**Winter Wren:** The peak of migration was 13 at East River Valley P *Story* 4 Oct (SSP). The last was one at Swiss Valley P *Dubuque* 26 Nov (Ben Horstmann).

**Sedge Wren:** Some notable counts included 15 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 15 Aug (BCC, DAS), 15 at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* (MHB), 13 at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* 25 Aug (SCS, KVS), and 20 at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* 22 Sep (DBr). The last was one at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 27 Oct (WV).

**Marsh Wren:** The most was 20 as a low estimate at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* 22 Sep (DBr). The last was one late bird at Cone Marsh



WA *Louisa* 18 Nov (KJM).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** The last was one at Cedar L *Linn* 24 Oct (AH).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** The first returning were 2 at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* 28 Sep (KJA). Numbers peaked with 12 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 5 Oct (CW) and 14 in Altoona *Polk* 6 Oct (UDG).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** The first returning was one at Whitham Woods *Jefferson* 1 Sep (Sylvia Fredericks). The last was one in a small timber *Mahaska* 25 Nov (Austin Roe).

**Townsend's Solitaire:** All: one at Lime Creek NC *Cerro Gordo* 17 Nov (RGo). The bird ended up wintering at the location.

**Veery:** Reported in seven counties, mostly in eastern Iowa. The last two were at Boyson Trail *Linn* (BCC) and at a yard in Buffalo *Scott* (RAS), both on 13 Sep.

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** All: one at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* 23 Aug (RLC), one at Cedar Valley Nature Trail *Buchanan* (Julie Bryson), one at a yard in Marion *Linn* 2 Sep (JOD), one at Squaw Creek P *Linn* 9 Sep (BCC), one at Boyson Trail *Linn* 13 Sep (BCC), 2 at a yard in Buffalo *Scott* 13 Sep (RAS).

**Swainson's Thrush:** The first returning was one at a yard in Marion *Linn* 25 Aug (JOD). The most was 9 at Brookside P *Story* 9 Sep (DAK). The last was one at a yard in Cedar Rapids *Linn* 1–3 Oct (GPF).

**Hermit Thrush:** The first return was one at Pikes Peak SP *Clayton* 28 Sep (Ryan McDonald). Migration peaked with 3 along Joplin Road *Bremer* 17 Oct (KCR) and 4 at East

River Valley P *Story* the same day (SSP).

**Wood Thrush:** The last was one at Harvest Preserve *Johnson* 8 Oct (JM).



American Robin, Spring Run Wildlife Area, Dickinson, 6 October 2019. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.

**American Robin:** Numbers started seeing triple digits with 300 at Terra P *Polk* 28 Sep (SCS). There were 100 at Water Works P *Polk* 4 Oct (JB), 134 north of Cherokee *Cherokee* 6 Oct (DB), 350 in Coralville *Johnson* 8 Oct (BWi), and 798 at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 13 Oct (SM). Peak migration was 18 Oct with 920 at a *Monona* farmhouse (JC). The last count over 100 was 114 at Hitchcock NC 10 Nov (SM).

**Gray Catbird:** The last was one at a yard in Iowa City *Johnson* 19 Nov (Eliza Willis).

**Brown Thrasher:** The last was one at a yard in Bode *Humboldt* 28 Nov that continued into winter (*fide* JAN).

**Northern Mockingbird:** All: one at a *Marion* farm 4 Aug; 2 at a yard in rural *Washington* 12 Aug feeding young, which remained until 13 Oct (FB), 2 near Mount Pleasant *Henry* 28 Oct (TMC).



**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** This species, now well established in the southeastern part of the state, continued to expand upstream on major rivers such as the Des Moines, Iowa, and Cedar. It also appears to have moved up sizable tributaries of those rivers. There was a single, long-staying outlier in northeast Iowa, likely a newly recorded species for Winneshiek County. Between one and 10 were at a *Marion* farm 4–10 Aug (Zeke VanZante) with comments the birds are now established year-round and breeding. There was one bird recorded as continuing at a yard in Brandon *Buchanan* 26 Aug. By 15 Oct the number had grown to 3 for the first time. A single bird was in a yard north of Grammer Grove *Marshall* on 10 Sep and 1 Oct (MP). There was one at Red Rock Res *Marion* 25 Sep (JG). Hybrids at this location were recorded in March 2019 and February 2020 (AB). Two came back to a yard in Greene *Butler* 24 and 26 Oct (BDB). On 7 Nov a single bird showed up at L Meyer P *Winneshiek* (LR) and it continued into winter. This Winneshiek bird seems to violate the thought the species expands along river corridors, perhaps suggesting other dispersal paths.

**American Pipit:** The first returning was one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 6 Oct (AB). A high of 25 was near Nevada *Story* 19 Oct (EEO). The last was one at Purple Martin L Water Resource Area *Polk* 16 Nov (RJT).

**Purple Finch:** The first returning bird was one at a *Washington* yard 20 Sep (Gail Heater).

**Red Crossbill:** All: one flew

over a yard in Ames *Story* 4 Aug (DAK), 4 were at Red Rock Res *Marion* 25 Aug (m.ob.), one to 15 were at Riverview Cemetery *Kossuth* 12 Aug to 12 Nov (MCK), 3 to 30 were at Graceland P Cemetery *Woodbury* 19 Sep to 9 Nov (BFH, GLV, POR, m.ob.). There was one at the home of Ron and Norma Anderson *Webster* 2 Nov (*fide* TNJ). One to 5 were at Harlington Cemetery *Bremer* 9 Nov into winter, one was north of Burlington *Des Moines* 24–25 Nov (BWl).

**White-winged Crossbill:** All: one at Graceland P Cemetery *Woodbury* 5 Oct (POR).

**Pine Siskin:** The first was one at Rock WA *Sioux* 1 Sep (CA). The most was 50 at Graceland P Cemetery *Woodbury* 8 Oct (BFH). The last were 4 at Tedesco ELC *Story* 23 Nov (SSP).

**Lapland Longspur:** The first to return were 25 in rural *Cerro Gordo* 15 Oct (RGo). Two large flocks were 3000 near Toledo *Tama* 4 Nov and 750 near Cresco *Howard* 18 Nov.

**Smith's Longspur:** All: 5 in rural *Cerro Gordo* 15 Oct (RGo).

**Snow Bunting:** All: 3 in rural *Winneshiek* 2 Nov (Karl Fliris), one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 9 Nov (JB) and 11 Nov (RJT), 5 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 24 Nov (AB), and 5 in rural *Hardin* 27 Nov (DCH).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** The last was one late individual at Tedesco ELC *Story* 5 Oct (SSP).

**Lark Sparrow:** The last was in rural *Woodbury* 5 Oct (POR).

**Chipping Sparrow:** Two late reports were one at a feeder in Coralville *Johnson* 15 Nov (CJC) and one at L Meyer P *Winneshiek* at a feeder 23–24 Nov (Bruce Ventura,

LR).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** The last was one in rural *Woodbury* 19 Oct (JC).

**Field Sparrow:** A late report was one at Cone Marsh WA *Louisa* 24 Nov (HK). The latest was one north of Burlington *Des Moines* 25 Nov (BWi).

**Fox Sparrow:** The first was one at Beaver Creek Bridge *Polk* 3 Oct (Noelle Wagner). Numbers peaked with 20 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 28 Oct (BCC).

**American Tree Sparrow:** The first were 8 at Green Island WA *Jackson* 14 Oct (TM). The first report above single digits was 14 at Farm Creek Public WA *Pottawattamie* 2 Nov (KH).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** The first was one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 26 Sep (CW).

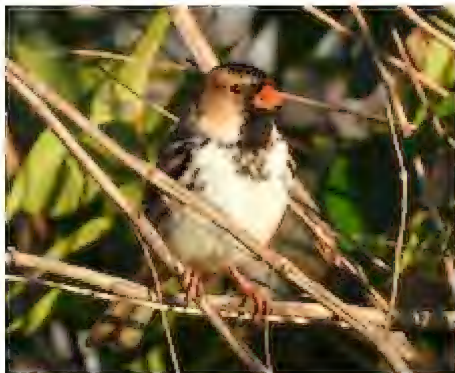


*Dark-eyed Junco*, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 11 November 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** The first was one at Loess Hills SF *Monona* 28 Sep (Joe Manning). From 18 to 30 were at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 19 Oct (BCC, JM), which included a few of the Gambel's race. There were 18 the same day at Cone Marsh WA *Louisa* (HL). There were 23 at

Muskrat Slough WA *Jones* 10 Oct (JE).

**Harris's Sparrow:** The first three sightings were one in a rural yard *Sioux* 25 Sep (JDJ), one at Hickory Grove P *Story* 26 Sep (Anna Buckardt) and one at Owego W *Woodbury* 26 Sep (JP). The most was 43 at the same *Sioux* yard 1 Nov (JDJ).



*Harris's Sparrow*, Big Creek State Park, Polk, 24 October 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.

**White-throated Sparrow:** The first were 15 Sep with one at Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve and Center *Floyd* (MWe) and one at Sleepy Hollow Access *Story* (SSP). Near peak numbers came on 28 Sep with 85 in Ames *Story* (Bill Thomas and Anna Buckardt) and 100 at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (EEO). Yet more impressive numbers were on 10 Oct, with 90 at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (BCC) and 80 at Muskrat Slough WA *Jones* (JE). The peak was 105 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 15 Oct (SCS). Another migratory pulse was 19 Oct with 50 at Sycamore Bottoms *Johnson* (JKe) and 74 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB). On 21 Oct there were 68 at Saylorville WA *Dallas* (RLC) and 82 at Trestle Trail *Polk*

(SCS). The last fairly large number was 60 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 25 Oct (BCC).



*White-throated Sparrow, Big Creek Wildlife Area, Polk, 31 October 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*

**Vesper Sparrow:** The last two reports were from opposite corners of the state: one in a *Sioux* yard 1 Nov (JDJ) and one at Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* 3 Nov (Jeanne Hedges).

**LeConte's Sparrow:** The first was one at Owego Wetland Complex *Woodbury* 26 Sep (BFH). The most was 5 at Errington Marsh WA *Polk* 17 Oct (RLC). The last was one at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 26–27 Oct (DH, WV).

**Nelson's Sparrow:** The first was one near Rockford *Floyd* 15 Sep (MWe). Five to 6 were near Hamburg *Fremont* 27 Sep to 1 Oct (Jerry Giesecking). The last were 2 in a *Dickinson* wetland 19 Oct (LAS).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** The last was one at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* 8 Oct (Kathrynne & Paul Baumtrog).

**Savannah Sparrow:** The most was 26 at Errington Marsh WA *Polk* 17 Oct (RLC). The last was one at Tedesco ELC *Story* 9 Nov (SSP), which continued at the location into winter.

**Song Sparrow:** There were 36 at Trestle Trail *Polk* 21 Oct (SCS). Another higher count was 31 at Terra Park *Polk* 29 Oct (SCS). Between 33 and 57 were at Tedesco ELC *Story* 5–9 Nov (SSP).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** The first was one at Tedesco ELC *Story* 21 Sep (SSP). The peak was 24 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 16 Oct (RLC). The last was one at Red Rock Res *Marion* 12 Nov (DW).

**Swamp Sparrow:** The peak was 41 at Muskrat Slough WA *Jones* 10 Oct (JE).

**Spotted Towhee:** All: one in a *Sioux* City yard *Woodbury* 13 Oct (Alex Cruz, Jr.), one at a *Monona* farmhouse 18 Oct (JC), one north of Winterset *Madison* 12–30 Nov that stayed into winter (Eric Byrd), and one in a Johnston yard *Polk* 10 Nov that stayed into winter (DTh).

**Eastern Towhee:** The latest was one at F.W. Kent P *Johnson* 19 Nov (MHB).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** No reports.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** There were 80 at Dewey's Pasture WA *Clay* 2 Sep (JDJ). The last was one at Marsh Farm W *Dallas* 19 Oct (CW).

**Bobolink:** The most was 65 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB) 1 Aug. The last was one in a rural *Sioux* yard 25 Sep (JDJ).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** The latest were 2 at Green Bay Bottoms *Lee* 6 Nov (JLF) and one at Chich-aqua Bottoms Greenbelt *Polk* 8 Nov (TJD).

**Western Meadowlark:** The most was 16, including fledglings, in rural *Woodbury* 3 Aug (POR).

**Orchard Oriole:** The last was a first year female in a rural *Sioux* yard 4 Sep (JDJ).

**Baltimore Oriole:** The most was 20 at L Macbride SP *Johnson* 25 Aug (MHB). The last was one at Iowa State University *Story* 29 Sep (SSP).

**Red-winged Blackbird:** A mixed flock with roughly 22,600 was at Deere Dike *Dubuque* 9 Oct (DAS). Around 20,000 were at Cone Marsh WA *Louisa* 10 Oct (JBo).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** There were 450 along Allis Road *Mills* 4 Aug (WRS). Two other sizable reports were 750 at DMACC Campus *Polk* 18 Oct (SSP). There were 595 at Tedesco ELC *Story* 20 Oct (CPL).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Reported from 19 counties. The first was one in Denver *Bremer* 3 Oct (KCR). There were at least 40 on DMACC Campus *Polk* 20 Oct (SSP). There were 33 near Waverly *Bremer* 16 Nov (MWe). The last was one at Crumbacher WA *Buchanan* 19 Nov (WV).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** All reports were in the western half of the state. The first were 4 near Superior *Dickinson* 28 Sep (JDJ). The most was 40 at Owego W *Woodbury* 7 Nov (AH). The last was one at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 10 Nov (SM).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** The most was 22 at Dunbar Slough WA *Greene* 9 Aug (RJT, TJD). There were 20 at Sapp Bros *Fremont* 9 Oct (SM).

**Ovenbird:** The last was one at Squaw Creek P *Linn* 5 Oct (BCC, DP).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** No reports.

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** The last was one at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* 1 Sep (CH).

**Northern Waterthrush:** The first was one at Brookside P *Story* 19 Aug (Julian Grudens). The last was one along Woodpecker Single Track bike trail *Johnson* 8 Oct (BWi).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** The first was one at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* 22 Aug (TM). Six were reported at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* 12 Sep (RGo). The last was one at Hollow View P *Scott* 22 Sep (FSS).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** The last were one at Green Island WA *Jackson* (JM) and one at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* (JM), both on 22 Sep.

**Black-and-white Warbler:** Notable counts were 9 at East River Valley P *Story* 27 Aug (SSP) and a peak of 15 at Boyson Trail *Linn* 13 Sep (BCC). The last was one in New Albin *Allamakee* 12 Oct (BRM).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** The last were 2 with details at Green Island WA *Jackson* 22 Sep (JM), a place well-known for breeding.

**Tennessee Warbler:** Numbers peaked with 20 at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (BCC) and 21 at L Macbride *Johnson* (MHB), both 7 Sep. The last was one at Big Spring Fish Hatchery *Clayton* 17 Oct (JDM).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** The first arrival was one at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* 9 Sep (BFH, RTo). Numbers started peaking with 7 at Trestle Trail *Polk* 2 Oct (SCS) and 8 at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 9 Oct (KH). The last were 2 at Trestle Trail *Polk* 3 Nov (SCS).

**Nashville Warbler:** Numbers began peaking with 12 at Woodpecker Single Track bike trail *Johnson* 23 Sep (BWi), with 13 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 26 Sep (RLC) and 12 at Squaw Creek P *Linn* 1 Oct (BCC). A



record late bird was recorded freshly dead at a Kirkwood Community College bus stop *Linn* 18 Nov (NB).

**Mourning Warbler:** The first was one at DMACC Campus *Polk* 21 Aug (SSP). Another one was at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* 23 Aug (BFH, RTo). The last was one at Boyson Trail *Linn* 13 Sep (BCC).

**Kentucky Warbler:** All: one at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* 3 Aug (CH).

**Common Yellowthroat:** The last was a late report of one at Cone Marsh WA *Louisa* 18 Nov (KJM).

**Hooded Warbler:** All: one first-year at Boyson Trail *Linn* 13 Sep (BCC).

**American Redstart:** The last was one late female/immature in Waverly *Bremer* 20 Oct (MWe).

**Cape May Warbler:** Reported in seven counties. The first was one in Marion *Linn* 31 Aug (JOD). The last was one in an Ames yard 9 Oct (DAk).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Reported in two counties. The last were 2 at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* 1 Sep (TM).

**Northern Parula:** The last was one at Squaw Creek P *Linn* 10 Oct (BCC).

**Magnolia Warbler:** The first was one in a *Sioux* yard 21 Aug (JDJ). Numbers peaked with 12 at Squaw Creek P *Linn* 7 Sep (BCC). The last was one at Clear Creek Trail *Johnson* 12 Oct (JTi, JAI).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** The first was one on DMACC Campus *Polk* 21 Aug (SSP). Numbers peaked with 10 at Woodpecker Single Track bike trail *Johnson* 17 Sep (BWi). The last was one at L Macbride *Johnson*

13 Oct (MHB).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** There were multiple first reports on 22 Aug, which included: one near Galt *Wright* (Bonnie Heinecke), one at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt *Polk* (RJT), 2 at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* (TM), one at Brookside P *Story* (TMH), one at Ledges SP *Boone* (DCH) and 4 at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Numbers peaked with 6 at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* 1 Sep (TM). The last was one at F.W. Kent P *Johnson* 1 Oct (FB).

**Yellow Warbler:** The last was one at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* 23 Sep (MHB).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** The first was one in a *Sioux* yard 21 Aug (JDJ). Numbers peaked with 20 at Hickory Hill Park *Johnson* 7 Sep (DH). The last was one at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* 10 Oct (TM).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** All: one at Squaw Creek P *Linn* 4 Sep (JF), one at Green Island WA *Jackson* 22 Sep (JM), and one in Cedar Rapids *Linn* 6 Oct (Garvin Filbert).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** All: one at Ledges SP *Boone* 4 Sep (DCH), one at Big Creek SP *Polk* 10 Sep (DyO), one at Water Works P *Polk* 16 Sep (JB), one at Bellevue SP *Jackson* 22 Sep (JM), one at Linwood Cemetery *Dubuque* 27 Sep (TM), one at Wickiup Hill Learning Center *Linn* 6–7 Oct (TW, DWa, BCC, CH), and one at Tedesco ELC *Story* 12 Oct (SSP).

**Palm Warbler:** The first was one at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* 23 Aug (BFH). The last was one at Cedar L *Linn* 14 Oct (JE, BCC).

**Pine Warbler:** All: one at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* 28 Aug

(TM), one at L Macbride *Johnson* 22 Sep (CRE, LGR), one at Squaw Creek P *Linn* 7 Oct (BCC).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** The first was in a *Scott* yard 13 Sep (RAS). Numbers peaked early to mid-October. High numbers were 156 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 5 Oct (AB) and 181 there 14 Oct (RJT), 83 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 12 Oct (AB), and 75 at Cedar L *Linn* 14 Oct (BCC).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** All: one at Brookside P *Story* 19 Aug (Julian Grudens), one at Peggy's Trail *Story* 22 Aug (SSP), one at Linwood Cemetery *Dubuque* 27 Aug (TM), one at Glendale Cemetery *Polk* 6 Sep (RJT), one at L Macbride *Johnson* 22 Sep (CRE, LGR) and 28 Sep (MHB).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** The first were observed 22 Aug with one in a Marion yard *Linn* (JOD) and 5 at Ledges SP *Boone* (DCH). The most were 6 on 20 Sep *Bremer* (KCR). Several observations were made 12 Oct, the last day the species was seen. These include: one at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB), one in Roland *Story* (Curt Fisher), and one at Clear Creek Trail *Johnson* (JTi, Jal).

**Canada Warbler:** The first was one at Saylorville Res *Polk* 21 Aug (RLC). A couple high counts were 7 at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* 22 Aug (RGo) and 6 at Bacon Creek P

*Woodbury* 24 Aug (BFH). The last was one at Water Works P *Polk* 25 Sep (JB).

**Wilson's Warbler:** The first was one in a Polk City yard *Polk* 20 Aug (AB). The most was 10 at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* 24 Aug (BFH). The last was one at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 19 Oct (JM).

**Summer Tanager:** A late male was at a Polk City yard *Polk* 1 Oct, probably continuing from 23 Sep (AB). A record 3rd latest was photographed 29 Nov at the residence of John and Sharon Polifka in rural *Monona* (fide POR).

**Scarlet Tanager:** The last was one at Deere Dike *Dubuque* 9 Oct (DAS).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** There were 16 counted at Saylorville Res *Polk* 31 Aug (RLC). The last was one at a yard in Dubuque *Dubuque* 30 Oct (KJA).

**Blue Grosbeak:** Reported in 17 counties. The last were 4 lingering female/immature birds from one of two nesting pairs in a rural yard *Sioux* on 21 Sep (JDJ).

**Indigo Bunting:** The last was one at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 19 Oct (JM).

**Dickcissel:** The last was one at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 9 Oct (BCC, DH).

## COMMENTS

This report involved over 76,000 individual reports of 263 species. I would especially like to thank those who contributed to the 1,586 reports from the IOU database. Additionally, there were numerous reports used from the Hitchcock HawkWatch, the Wisconsin DNR waterfowl aerial survey, and aerial inventory data from the Illinois Natural History Survey. Regular species not reported that likely went undetected include Yellow Rail, Whimbrel, Barn Owl, and Ruffed Grouse. I am also indebted to Ann Johnson for helping me

obtain and render a more manageable Microsoft Excel file of the Iowa fall 2019 eBird data.

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Thomas Dougherty	TJD	Tony Moline	TM	Rob Towler	RTTo
Seth Dudley	SD	Kevin Murphy	KTM	Wendy VanDeWalle	WV
Jim Durbin	JOD	Jane Newman	JNw	Karen Viste-Sparkman	KVS
David Eastman	DGE	Wolf Oesterreich	WO	Gerald Von Ehwegen	GLV
Chris R. Edwards	CRE	Eric Ollie	EEO	Edge Wade	EW
Jesse Ellis	JE	Alan and Karen Orr	ADO	Phil Walsh	PJW
Garvin Filbert	GPF	Dylan Osterhaus	DyO	Danelle Waters	DWa
Carolyn Fischer	CJF	Shane Patterson	SSP	Torin Waters	TW
Pip Fisher	PF	Jason Paulios	JPa	Dan Watkins	DW
Sean Fitzgerald	SF	Jerry Probst	JP	Mark Weldford	MWe
Jim Forde	JF	Mark Proescholdt	MP	Ben West	BMW
Steven Freed	SMF	Linda Quinn	LQ	Gerald White	GDW
James L. Fuller	JLF	Mike Rabenberg	MRa	Bobby Wilcox	BWi
Jay Gilliam	JG	Kris and Craig Rash	KCR	Clayton Will	CW
Rita Goranson	RG	Dan Ray	Dra	Hank Zaletel	HZ
Ulrike Grimaldi	UDG	Larry Reis	LR		
Tyler Harms	TMH	Billy Reiter-Marolf	BRM		
Doug Harr	DCH	Paul Roisen	POR		



# Hitchcock Nature Center Hawk Watch Report Fall 2019

*Erin Scott*

## OVERVIEW

The Hitchcock Hawk Watch had an interesting year. The weather was better this year but we still had several storms during the season that affected visibility. There were 19 days of precipitation and/or dense fog, but only one day where conditions prohibited a count from being conducted. In the second half of the season a cold front sat over the area from 8 to 14 November, which seemed to affect migration as we saw a larger than normal push the last few weeks of the season. However, from mid-season until the end of the count, we had on average nearly double the number of birds each week as for the last two years during those weeks. There were 5989 raptors detected this season, down 40% from the 2002–2018 average of 9917. Monthly averages were also down for each month with November showing the greatest drop. Counters logged 709.25 hours of observation, and saw an average of 8.4 birds per hour this season.

**Table 1. Raptor counts at Hitchcock Nature Center during the fall 2019 season**

Species	Number	Species	Number
Black Vulture	0	Red-tailed Hawk	1215
Turkey Vulture	2840	Rough-legged Hawk	12
Osprey	123	Ferruginous Hawk	0
Swallow-tailed Kite	0	American Kestrel	73
Golden Eagle	11	Merlin	32
Northern Harrier	108	Gyr Falcon	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	219	Peregrine Falcon	80
Cooper's Hawk	240	Prairie Falcon	1
Northern Goshawk	4	Unknown Accipiter	26
Bald Eagle	397	Unknown Eagle	0
Mississippi Kite	3	Unknown Buteo	25
Red-shouldered Hawk	5	Unknown Falcon	2
Broad-winged Hawk	365	Unknown Raptor	59
Swainson's Hawk	148	Total Raptors	5989

## SPECIES ANALYSIS

Even though raptor numbers were at their lowest this season we saw 19 species (Table 1) with one notable rarity, a Gyr Falcon. Falcons overall were steady in comparison to the previous season's averages with American Kestrel

showing a rise over the last two years and Peregrine Falcon numbers 50% above their average this year with the majority of them migrating in September. Osprey had a good year as well with an average increase of 17% overall. Golden Eagle, Turkey Vulture, Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Cooper's Hawk numbers were steady and within each species' average range. Broad-winged Hawks dropped to the low end of their past number this year with 365 counted. Swainson's Hawks dropped as well, to 148, but this is well above their lowest numbers counted. Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, and Rough-legged Hawk numbers were half the historic averages. The hawk with the steepest drop in total numbers was the Sharp-shinned Hawk with only 219 detected, dropping below the overall average by 73%. No Ferruginous Hawks were detected, but notably a Gyrfalcon was captured, banded and then seen from the tower making that the first one detected since 2014.

9204 Cherry St Kansas City, MO 64131 (scotterinamber@gmail.com)



*Northern Harrier, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 23 November 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*

# 2019 Hitchcock Raptor Banding Project in Perspective

*Jerry Toll*

## DIURNAL RAPTOR BANDING

Each of the 13 seasons that Sandy Reinken and I have been banding raptors at Hitchcock Nature Center has had unusual situations and challenges. The fall 2019 season was no exception. On 6 September, opening day, we banded a Cooper's Hawk, but the September weather was often too hot and/or rainy to safely lure with pigeons and sparrows. For the next 12 days, only four raptors were captured. Of those captured, one Red-tailed Hawk was big boned and, despite its weight being in normal range, required using a #8 band. I did not have one at the banding station that day, since there had not been a Red-tailed Hawk in previous seasons requiring a #8 until 2018. Thus, measurements were taken but it was not banded. On 19 September, migration began in earnest and the volume continued routinely through 2 November.

Red-tailed Hawk (N=121), Cooper's Hawk (N=14), and Sharp-shinned Hawk (N=12), are bread-and-butter species at the banding station, so it is especially pleasing when another raptor species is captured. On 20 September, an after-second-year Broad-winged Hawk was banded when a small kettle of Broad-winged Hawks lifted up nearby. A second Broad-winged Hawk was banded on 24 September, also an adult. They are not often captured (only



Figure 1: Merlin, Hitchcock Nature Center, Pottawattamie, 21 September 2019. Photograph by Jerry Toll, Omaha, NE.

11 previously, of which two were captured each season in 4 of the last 5 seasons). On 21 September, the first of two Merlins was banded (Figure 1). The second was captured the next day. It was especially pleasing since we had not banded a single Merlin during the 2018 season. Both were hatch-year birds of the *columbarius* subspecies, one female and one male. Merlin has been banded in 9 of the 13 seasons. On the 22nd, a hatch-year Red-shouldered Hawk was the first raptor of the day

to be banded. One Red-shouldered Hawk has been banded each of the last four years at Hitchcock. The only other record occurred in 2012, when two were banded. On 23 September, an after-hatch-year male American Kestrel was banded, the first of two. The second, on 26 October, was also male, but a hatch-year. Not many kestrels are banded at Hitchcock (N=7). In previous



years only about one-half of the seasons had kestrel captures. They don't seem to migrate through the wooded Loess Hills, perhaps preferring open country in the Missouri River Valley. The ones that do are rarely captured. They may come in for a look and sit on a perch but are soon hawking grasshoppers and other insects and ignore the starling lure. House Sparrows were used this year, which may account in part for our success in 2019. The first of two Peregrine Falcon captures occurred on 24 September late in the day. The second Peregrine Falcon was banded 29 September and had an unusual plumage that made it difficult to age. It had not completed its molting by migration, which is atypical, and was showing streaks of old, worn feathers alternating with streaks of new, fresh feathers over much of its body and wings. It was aged as a second-year because the breast had both streaking (hatch-year) and barring (adult) feather patterns. Both were determined to be of the *tundrius* subspecies due to the narrow malar mark and tawny forehead (Wheeler 2003).

While September can have the most diversity of species, the last half of October can have the biggest surprises. On 22 October near closing time, a male hatch-year Northern Goshawk made a surprise visit. It was only the third Northern Goshawk banded at Hitchcock. On Halloween, 31 October, came another surprise. I was distracted away from watching the lure when I heard a whooshing of wings. I looked up and a large raptor had come low over the blind from behind and was speeding for the lure pigeon. It was a large falcon! It hit the pigeon but could not maintain its grasp and landed on the other side of the pigeon away from the blind. It immediately returned and captured the pigeon upon which I in turn captured the falcon. I approached the falcon in the bow net and examined it quizzically while removing it because the plumage and size just didn't fit that of a Peregrine, which I had expected. Briefly, I considered Prairie Falcon. No again. It wasn't until I entered the blind with the falcon in hand that I even considered the possibility that it could be a Gyrfalcon. I was by myself and had my hands full. It did not appreciate the turn of events, as I did, and was ear-splittingly telling me so and trying to bite my hands. I knew that this could well turn out to be a state record so I knew to proceed cautiously and get my

extreme excitement under control. Raptors in hand respond favorably to a calm handler and for the sake of the falcon and I, we needed to work together to get through the process calmly. In the banding process, an appropriately sized open-ended can is used to confine and calm the bird during weighing and the placing of bands on the tarsi. It also gave me time to prepare to reference the morphometric parameters of



Figure 2. Gyrfalcon, Hitchcock Nature Center, Potawatamie, 31 October 2019. Photograph by Jenny James.

Gyr Falcon with the bird in hand (Pyle 2008). I also notified the hawk watchers of the situation and requested a member to come and take photos. The falcon calmed. I calmed and the banding process went smoothly. The band size, wing chord, length of tail, and plumage aspects all fit those of a female gray morph, hatch-year Gyr Falcon (Figure 2). She remained calm through the banding process and during the wait for Jenny James to arrive to take photos. When she was again taken outside for photos and released, she made it clear that she was ready to be away from humans. Documentation was submitted to the Iowa Records Committee and accepted (2019-33). A check of previous documentation submitted to the Records Committee for this species found a total of 30 records on file of which 13 were accepted (Iowa Records Committee 2020). The oldest accepted record was dated 27 March 1992 (#1992-33) (Bolduan 1994, Kent and Putney 2014).

Ten species of raptors were banded during the fall 2019 season, four of which were falcons. This was a new record for number of species. The next highest diversity of species banded occurred in 2012 when nine species were banded, four of which were again falcons. They were Peregrine and Prairie falcons, Merlin, and American Kestrel.

All told, 158 diurnal raptors were banded in fall 2019 (Table 1).

There were 121 Red-tailed Hawks banded in 2019, a record year barely inching out the 2009 season of 120 and the 2015 season of 118. Diversity of

Table 1. Age and sex determined for raptors banded at Hitchcock Nature Center, Fall 2019											
Species	No.	Age <sup>a</sup>							Sex		
		HY	SY	ASY	TY	AHY	4Y	% HY	Female	Male	Unk.
Sharp-shinned Hawk	12	6	2	4				50	10	2	
Cooper's Hawk	14	4		10				28	4	10	
Northern Goshawk	1	1								1	
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	1									1
Broad-winged Hawk	2					2					2
Red-tailed Hawk	121	71	17	31	1	1		57			121
American Kestrel	2	1				1				2	
Merlin	2	2							1	1	
Peregrine Falcon	2	1	1						2		
Gyr Falcon	1	1							1		
Total diurnal raptors	158										
Northern Saw-whet Owl	29	19	2	7			1	65.5	23	3	3
Total raptors	187	107	22	52	1	4	1				

<sup>a</sup>Abbreviations: HY = Hatch Year or first calendar year of life, SY = Second Year, ASY = After Second Year, TY = Third Year, AHY = After Hatch Year, 4Y = Fourth Year

subspecies was apparent with 23 *Buteo jamaicensis harlanii* and 21 *B. j. calurus* (western), or 19% and 17% of the total Red-tailed Hawks, respectively. There were 4 Krider's of the *B. j. borealis* (eastern) subspecies, all of them

hatch-years. Interestingly, in the past five seasons, all were hatch-year (N=15). Going back 10 years, only three were older (N=33). The remaining 73 Red-tailed Hawks were mostly *B. j. borealis* although some of these had characteristics of the as yet accepted subspecies *abieticola* (Ligouri and Sullivan 2014). Separating Red-tailed Hawks to subspecies is challenging in the field. They are equally challenging in the hand even though the characteristics are there to see, because often the bird shares plumage characteristics of two or more subspecies. The above categories include those birds that had shared plumage characteristics but I included them in the predominant category. There were three classified as unknown; that is, there were plumage characteristics from at least three subspecies and no one set of characteristics predominated. One of these Red-tailed Hawks had characteristics of three subspecies and those of *abieticola*, which were the plumage characteristics that predominated.

Two Red-tailed Hawks were encountered that had been previously banded, only the second and third time that this has occurred with a diurnal raptor at Hitchcock Banding Station. The first encounter was with a hatch-year bird that was captured on 29 September. It was first rehabilitated by Raptor Recovery Nebraska and released at its capture site in downtown Omaha, Nebraska on 14 September 2019. The second banded bird was captured 23 October. It was a hatch-year bird that had been previously banded 4 October 2019 two miles west of Preparation Canyon State Park in Monona County, Iowa.

On 24 October, a second-year Red-tailed Hawk was captured that was missing its right foot. The wound was mostly healed and did not appear to have swelling. One can only speculate how it came to lose its foot and how it survived the wound and the subsequent healing process. It had an adequate fat score, energy, weight, and muscle mass so it was banded and released.

Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers set a new record low of only 12 captured. The 12-year mean is 29 captured. By comparison, the Hitchcock HawkWatch observed its lowest tally of Sharp-shinned Hawks in 2019 by counting only 219. The hawk watch has been seeing a decline since 2014 and the 18-year mean is 937 Sharp-shinned Hawks.

#### NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL BANDING

Northern Saw-whet Owl banding season began 12 October and ended 24 November. The first capture occurred on the evening of 19 October. Five mist nets, nine meters long by 2.6 meters high with a 60mm mesh size, are arranged in an “L” shaped pattern on a ridge line in the southeastern border of Hitchcock Nature Center. An audio lure plays a continuous recording of the male breeding call to attract Northern Saw-whet Owls to the nets for capture and banding. The crew attempts to band four evenings per week, weather and conditions permitting, with sessions consisting of five net checks with a 45-minute interval between checks. The season ends after 15 November when there are three consecutive sessions with no new captures.

Twenty-nine Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded during fall migration in 2019. This is well below the 100 banded in 2017, 72 banded in 2011, and 69 banded in 2012 (Figure 3). It was well above the low years of 2018 and 2013



when only 17 and 25, respectively, were banded. Annual migratory densities have been shown to follow a 4-year cycle at East Coast banding stations (Whalen and Watts 2002), and Hitchcock’s annual migratory density has thus far roughly followed that pattern. De Ruyck (2009) found the migratory density cycle in Manitoba was six years. However, neither study covered more than a single cycle. Further long-term study using multiple locations is needed on this topic.

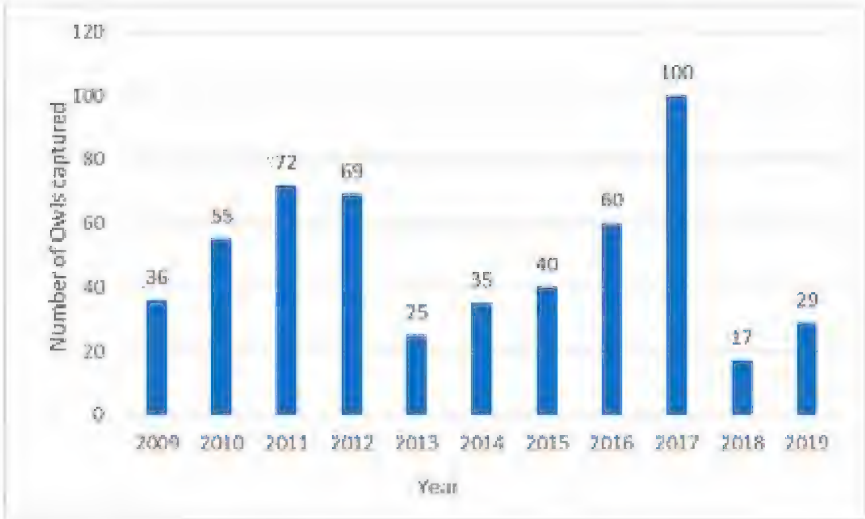


Figure 3. Northern Saw-whet Owl captures by year at Hitchcock Nature Center.

Of the 29 owls captured, 65% (N=19) were hatch-year (Table 1). I would expect to see a higher percentage of hatch-year birds in a recovery year following a low year and the same trend did occur in 2014 with 57% (N=20). One of those captured had been previously banded. Based on the wing molt pattern of inner primaries and secondaries being old and the outer primaries and secondaries being new (Pyle 1997), the owl was aged at the time to be a second-year bird. The Bird Banding Laboratory notified us that the owl had been banded by Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory in Duluth, Minnesota on 8 October 2016 as a hatch-year bird. This revelation made the bird actually a fourth-year owl. The discrepancy between what was observed and the actual age of the owl created confusion about the quality of our practice ageing Northern Saw-whet Owls...for about a week. Then a new article came out on a long-term, large sample-size study of recaptured Saw-whets that compared the molt pattern of owls in hand to their known hatch year. They found that the fourth-year pattern resembles the second-year pattern and hypothesized that subsequent molts, as they age, alternate with resembling the second-year and third-year patterns and grow increasingly more varied with age (Mackentley et al. 2019).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since inception of the hawk watch, the Pottawattamie County Conservation

Board and staff have seen the long-term value of having first the hawk watch and then the Raptor Banding Project at Hitchcock. Their continued support, both organizationally and financially, has been crucial to the advancement of raptor migration monitoring and protection in Iowa. Sandy Reinken each year uses vacation time so that she can band raptors during the day and enables us to cover the diurnal banding station 7 days per week during the 2-month season. Thank you, Sandy! The Audubon Society of Omaha has adopted Hitchcock Nature Center and provided funding assistance for the Saw-whet Owl banding as well as many volunteer hours contributed by their members, including me. Attendance at the Raptor Research Foundation annual conference 7-8 November is critical exposure to current raptor topics. Jason McMeen's contribution made that happen. We have been fortunate to have a troupe of dedicated volunteers for the past two seasons: Abbe Richardson, Kris Hammond, Kellie Hayden, Steve Schmitt, Scott Bradley, Mary Clausen, Karen Kutz Smith, Kady Hatfield, Dorie Stone, and Alyssa Wolken. Thank you all!

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# Iowa Ornithologists' Union Board of Directors Meeting

17 November 2019

**The Iowa Ornithologists' Union (IOU) board of directors** held a meeting at Crown Point Community Center in Johnston, Iowa. President Dennis Thompson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Attending were Vice President Pip Fisher; Secretary Sharon Bauer; Treasurer Mary Beth Hunt; and Directors at large Curt Nelson, Eric Ollie, Diane Dentlinger, Thomas Dougherty, and Kevin Murphy. Guests attending were Paul Hertzell, Ann Johnson, and Doug Hunt.

**Secretary's Report:** The minutes from the 24 August 2019 fall meeting have been published on the IOU website. Pip Fisher moved to approve the minutes as published. Eric Ollie seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

**Online Board Action:** Heather Sanders was approved by online vote for addition to the events committee.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**Breeding Bird Atlas:** Steve Dinsmore has reported on some progress with the BBA. The IOU has budgeted \$10,000 for this project along with another approximately \$6,700 in private donations for publishing the publication. Denny will continue to follow up with Steve and Shane Patterson as the project continues.

**Birding Kits Proposal:** At this time we don't have any details on the proposal for birding kits. After discussion it was decided that working with the Iowa Association of Naturalists would be the best way to gather additional information. Eric Ollie will contact the Iowa Association of Naturalists and initiate a conversation that the IOU would be willing to fund such a project.

**Marilyn Irely Gift:** The gift from the Marilyn Irely estate of \$43,852.96 was increased to \$50,000 and is currently in a CD gathering interest of 2%. The CD matures 5 September 2020. There was considerable discussion on how to proceed with fund distribution for this gift. Consensus was that the funds be allocated for a major project in memory of Marilyn Irely. Denny will contact the projects committee to ask if they would be willing to oversee this special project. This would be above and beyond their yearly \$5,000 budget and would require board approval.

**Membership and Communications Committee:** President Dennis Thompson reported that the membership and communications committee are both in a state of limbo with no chairpersons. It was agreed that both of these committees perform valuable services in increasing awareness of the IOU, adding to our membership and retaining members. The job description for the communications committee is to maintain electronic communications with members. The membership committee's charge is to maintain a list of the IOU membership

and maintain and increase members. There was some discussion of combining the communications and membership committees into one committee. It was decided to table this idea for now. Denny will reach out to members of the communication committee for input on how active they want to be on the committee. We need to recruit people to take an active part in these committees.

There was discussion of meeting times for all committees. Our spring and fall meetings offer an excellent opportunity for committees to meet face to face if possible. Pip will research options for electronic meetings, which would be a valuable tool for all of our committees.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Records Committee:** Paul Hertzell reported that Bill Scheible is scheduled to rotate off of the committee after a six-year term. John Bissell has agreed to serve on the committee pending board approval. Mary Beth Hunt moved to approve John Bissell as a member of the records committee. Diane Dentlinger seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

**Audit:** Tom Dougherty recently completed an audit and reported his findings. The first was on fund balances for life memberships. Tom recommends we continue to support the life members but clean up the fund by removing the amortization

for life members and put it in the general fund. We currently have 41 life members.

Tom also reported that our constitution requires bonding only for our treasurer. Our current policy cost \$75 per year and covers \$10,000. He recommends we increase the policy to cover a larger amount and also cover additional people that might have access to these funds. Mary Beth and Doug will check costs to increase the coverage to \$50,000.

**Upcoming Michigan Trip:** The events committee is in the process of planning a trip to Michigan in spring 2020. After discussion it was decided to obtain an additional debit/credit card with a credit limit to be used by the trip leader to pay for fees. He will bring back itemized receipts for the treasurer.

**Recognizing long time members:** Bob Nicholson has been an IOU member for 70+ years. Mary Beth Hunt proposed we recognize Bob and any other long time members at our spring meeting.

**Budget Meeting:** Budget meeting will be set for mid-January.

Diane Dentlinger moved to adjourn the meeting. Kevin Murphy seconded the motion and the motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

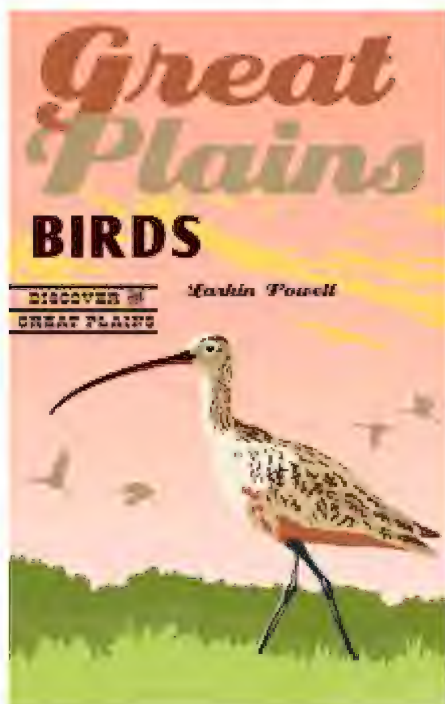
Sharon Bauer, secretary



## Book Review: *Great Plains Birds* by Larkin Powell

Carl Nollen

*Great Plains Birds*, by Larkin Powell, 2019, 206 pp., 65 color photos and illustrations, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE, ISBN 978-1-4962-0418-9, \$16.95, softcover.



Iowa is not a Great Plains state, but its remaining prairie habitats are home to a good number of plains birds. As birds of the prairie grasslands are declining at a greater rate than other habitats, it is necessary to know these birds and be aware of their lives. This book is a narrative about these birds.

The author is an Iowa farm boy who went to college at a small school in southern Iowa, but he does not name either place. He reluctantly accompanied his conservation-minded father in March, 1987, to Kearney, Nebraska, to see the Sandhill Crane spectacle. His time there changed his path of life and started a three-decade process of seeing the Great Plains in a new light. He invites you to explore the Great Plains and plan for moments like this. He calls the Great Plains a wonderful place to find surprises to call your own. “The birds have stories

to tell...and the birds are out there waiting for you.”

The first of five chapters is “The Birds: Symbols of the Great Plains.” Because so many grassland birds are brown, they use song, aerial displays, or dancing to attract mates. Common birds are described and pictured. Some of their mating behaviors are explained, such as Sandhill Crane stick throwing, the dances of the Western Grebe, the prairie-chicken, and the Sharp-tailed Grouse, and the broken-wing displays of the four species of plovers.

Chapter Two is “The Place: Homes, Habitat and Aerial Highways.” What is considered empty landscape by the easily bored, such as the prairie potholes in North Dakota, is home to a host of birds. Some geologic history is presented to include the giant Ogallala Aquifer which peeks above the ground to create lakes and wetlands in the Nebraska Sandhills. Because there are fewer niches in grasslands, fewer species have evolved here. He provides a list nine primary species of endemic grassland birds of the Great Plains, which he credits to

Fritz Knopf, an ornithologist who worked with prairie birds his entire life.

Migration is covered well, noting that there are few landmarks to guide the flyers, and many migration journeys are spectacular in length. The blue-winged teal, which migrates from the northern prairies to Argentina, is one example.

The hybrid zone in the Plains is especially relevant, as these grasslands have served as a barrier to forest species of the west coming east, and vice versa. Several “sister species” are explained, with the western and eastern species pictured side by side. The red-shafted and yellow-shafted flicker subspecies hybridize, as do the Western and Eastern meadowlarks. The best identification feature of the meadowlarks is their song, which in a hybrid is a garbled mixture of the two species-specific songs. Western and Eastern kingbirds rarely hybridize. Bullock’s and Baltimore orioles hybridize extensively, causing taxonomic arguments whether they are species or subspecies.

Chapter Three is “The Problems: Humans and Birds on the Plains.” We all know how the prairie lands have been greatly changed by humans. “The story of habitat change in the Great Plains is the story of agriculture.” The author is understanding and sympathetic to the changes to farming. “Conservation efforts in grassland landscapes are dwarfed by powerful economic forces, and successful planning for the future must focus on ways to integrate native features into highly productive agricultural landscapes.” The writer tells about his encounter with a rancher in the Sandhills. After gaining his trust, the rancher



*Eastern Bluebird, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 22 October 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*

pointed to a Bald Eagle nest near his house, wondering why the eagles were adding sticks to their nest in October. He thought it was a little early for them to be worrying about their nest. The next spring, he noticed the eagles sitting on their nest, and the dead tree branches were all iced down on the ground. He realized that those eagles knew they wouldn’t be able to do their stick-gathering in the winter, so they did it in the fall. The rancher was proud of his observation. This little insight by an amateur helps the research biologist. The Native Americans have been observing the birds around them for centuries. The author relates tribal stories on why the prairie-chicken dances and why the crow is black.

The hunting excesses of the 19th Century are covered, to include a list kept by five men over 20 days in 1872 which included a total of 1,262 birds and other animals that they had killed. Not only was game shot, but meadowlarks, robins, etc., and one bluebird for the Lieutenant Colonel’s sweetheart’s

hat. From April to June 1867, nearly 100,000 Passenger Pigeons were sold at one game market in Chicago, one of more than 200 meat markets existing in Chicago then. A photograph of wild birds for sale at a game market in Chicago shows barrels of birds. On another page, a beautiful, full-page color picture of John J. Audubon's painting of two Passenger Pigeons is presented, possibly to brighten this depressing part of our nation's history. In 1878, Iowa became the first state in the nation to impose bag limits on a game species, in this case 25 Greater Prairie-Chickens per day. Climate change is covered in this chapter to include shifting migration dates. A chart of 41 species predicting how they will fare lists the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher as the species to benefit the most by expanding its range, and the Baird's Sparrow to suffer the worst decline.

Chapter Four is "The Hope: Conservation Strategies." The Duck Stamp, which began in 1934, was a brilliant movement for conservation. There are yearly competitions for each year's unique design. Generating \$25 million per year, these funds are used to purchase or manage habitat for waterfowl. Almost six million acres in the United States have been acquired for public use, which includes all or part of 300 national wildlife refuges. Other conservation strategies are the Soil Conservation Act - the "Farm Bill," including the Conservation Reserve Program.

Chapter Five is "The Experience: Visiting the Birds of the Great Plains." Some basic bird identification tips and responsibilities are given, along with the "Trials and Tribulations of Grassland Birding." We must look for field marks among the brown and camouflaged scenes.

The most important quality in a bird watcher is a willingness to stand quietly and see what comes. Occasionally one may come and look you in the eye before it flies away. Prime birding locations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Montana, Wyoming, Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas are listed.

The book is completed with a list of bird identification apps, books/publications, websites, and an index. Larkin Powell is professor of conservation biology in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.



*Canada Warbler, Ledges State Park, Boone, 22 August 2019. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*



## Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life*

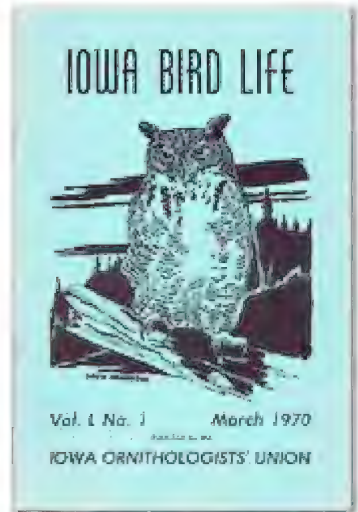
*James J. Dinsmore*

The March 1970 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* starts with a short article by long-time bird bander Mrs. W. C. DeLong who describes a number of recaptures and returns from birds she has banded. These include returns from three birds she banded near Shenandoah: a White-throated Sparrow found dead in Alberta, Canada, a Cedar Waxwing, found dead in Fort Worth, Texas, and a Blue Jay found dead in Kansas. A Harris's Sparrow she captured near Shenandoah had been banded in North Dakota. And yet some birds such as Dark-eyed Juncos and American Tree Sparrows that she banded were recaptured when they returned to her yard.

Much of the issue consists of John Faaborg's report on the 1969–70 Christmas Bird Count. A record total of 115 species was found on 28 counts. Davenport had the most species (82) with Clinton (70) and Muscatine (65) having the next greatest totals. The greatest species count totals were Mallard (24,819), House Sparrow (22,574), and European Starling (17,886). Only a single individual was found of 12 species including Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Lincoln's Sparrow, and LeConte's Sparrow, the latter being a new species for CBCs in Iowa. It was a good year for northern birds such as Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, both crossbills, and Pine Siskin. Amazingly, not a single Canada Goose was found and only two Wild Turkeys and 81 Bald Eagles were found. Times have changed.

Dean Roosa summarized bird banding activity in Iowa in 1969. Fourteen individuals/groups banded a total of 17,432 birds of 171 species. The most commonly banded species were Mallard, Mourning Dove, and Blue-winged Teal, all with more than 1,700 individuals banded. Only a single individual of 18 species was banded. Some of the more interesting of those were Least Bittern, Chuck-will's-widow, Pine Warbler, and White-winged Crossbill.

Among the better finds for the winter season field reports were White-winged Scoters at Davenport and Clinton, an American Pipit near Shenandoah in December, a Pine Grosbeak in Des Moines, and 100 White-winged Crossbills at Wallingford.



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# IOU

## Profit & Loss

January through December 2019

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	Jan - Dec 19
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
5200 Meeting Income	9,999.00
5300 Merchandise Sales	516.40
5450 Silent Auctions	416.00
5650 Special Revenue	550.00
5900 Interest Income	950.47
Donations	
5100 Donations - Unspecified	44,483.22
5140 Donations- Publications	435.00
5150 Donations- BBA	150.00
5160 - Projects	94.00
Total Donations	45,162.22
Dues	
4012 Fledgling Dues	40.00
4020 Goldfinch Dues	1,555.00
4035 Bluebird Dues	4,540.00
4050 Baltimore Oriole Dues	2,550.00
4075 Great Egret Dues	670.00
4100 Osprey Dues	2,100.00
4250 Bald Eagle Dues	250.00
4500 Peregrine Falcon Dues	550.00
4800 Institutions Dues	410.00
Total Dues	12,665.00
Total Income	70,259.09
Expense	
6200 Meeting Expenses	8,668.01
6600 Insurance-Liability	567.00
6900 Bank & Pay Pal Exp.	558.65
7000 - Other Expense	21.43
Committees	
6708 Committees - Conserv/Proj	5,334.75
Total Committees	5,334.75
Publications	
6110 Publications - IA Bird Lif	20,750.05
6120 Publications -Internet Svc	231.17
Publications - Other	99.98
Total Publications	21,081.20
Total Expense	36,231.04
Net Ordinary Income	34,028.05

**IOU**  
**Balance Sheet**  
As of December 31, 2019

	Dec 31, 19
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1150 Checking - 1st Citizens	33,861.33
1450 Checking - Comm 1st CU	46,675.51
1550 Savings - Comm 1st CU	5.00
CD 9-5-20 Comm 1st	50,330.17
Total Checking/Savings	130,872.01
Total Current Assets	130,872.01
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>130,872.01</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
Deferred Revenue	1,920.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	1,920.00
Total Current Liabilities	1,920.00
Total Liabilities	1,920.00
Equity	
3000 General Operating Fund GOF	60,146.41
Fund Balances	
3220 Projects	1,346.55
3300 Memorial Fund	11,882.79
3400 Publication Enhancement	4,978.21
3500 BBA Fund	16,570.00
Total Fund Balances	34,777.55
Net Income	34,028.05
Total Equity	129,952.01
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>130,872.01</b>

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** (renewable yearly):

Fledgling (students) \$20 (electronic only), Institutional (domestic) \$30, Institutional (foreign) \$45, Goldfinch \$25 (electronic only), Bluebird \$35, Oriole \$50, Egret \$75, Osprey \$100, Bald Eagle \$250, and Peregrine Falcon \$500+. Membership dues entitle members to receive *Iowa Bird Life* quarterly and to vote and hold office in the Union. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Join, give a gift, or manage your membership on-line at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>. Paper forms for new members and renewals may be mailed to the treasurer. Back issues of *Iowa Bird Life* are available from Membership Coordinator Cecille Thompson, 7503 Wildflower Ct, Johnston, IA 50131 ([cecillethompson@gmail.com](mailto:cecillethompson@gmail.com)).

**INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:**

Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to editor at [vistesparrow@gmail.com](mailto:vistesparrow@gmail.com). Research manuscripts should include abstract, introduction, study area, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited sections and will be sent for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published promptly depending on space available.

**PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS:**

Submit only original, unsized, and unenhanced photos in your camera's JPEG (\*.jpg) format. Photos must be 300 dpi at the size they will be printed (6-1/2" wide by 6-1/2" high for the cover and various smaller sizes inside), so setting your camera to its highest possible resolution is recommended. The editor will do any resizing and enhancing required because any previous adjustments to the photos may make them unusable. Members may upload their photos using the upload tool, Upload IBL Photos, after logging in. If you have trouble with internet connectivity preventing using the tool, email to the editor. Submit graphs or maps as email attachments to your manuscript to the editor.

Deadlines for submission are 1 January for winter issue (Vol. xx[1]), 1 April for spring issue [2], 1 July for summer issue [3], 1 October for fall issue [4]. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

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**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Yellow-billed Loon, Brushy Creek SRA, *Webster*, 18 August 2019. Photograph by Dean Hester, North English, IA.

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** Cedar Waxwing, Big Creek Wildlife Area, Polk, 4 November 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.

**LAYOUT:** Doreen Van Ryswyk, Mitchellville, IA.

**GRAPHICS:** Paul Hertz, Mason City, IA.

**PRINTER:** Centennial Printing, Louisville, CO.



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# **IOWA BIRD LIFE**

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## **IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



Spring 2020 • Volume 90 • Number 2



## IOWA BIRD LIFE

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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life is a quarterly publication of the Union.*

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**Errata:** We regret two errors in *Iowa Bird Life* 90(1). The title of the article on page 4 should be: "A Review of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck Occurrence in Iowa". The photo legend for the upper right photo on page 31 misidentified the bird as a Swainson's Thrush. It is a Veery.

# Greater Prairie-Chickens in Iowa: Another Look

*James J. Dinsmore and Stephen J. Dinsmore*

When settlers arrived in Iowa in the 1800s, the Greater Prairie-Chicken was an abundant species throughout the state. Because of habitat loss and excessive hunting, those populations declined dramatically in the late 1800s, and by the early 1900s only a rapidly declining nesting population remained in Iowa (Dinsmore 1994). That population disappeared in the 1950s, and the species was considered extirpated in Iowa (Stempel and Rodgers 1961). In recent years the Iowa Department of Natural Resources has made several attempts to reestablish a breeding population, first with releases in Monona County in 1980 and 1982 and later with releases near Kellerton in Ringgold County in 1987–1989, 1992–1994, and 2012–2016. Currently, those releases have been successful in reestablishing a small breeding population of Greater Prairie-Chickens in southern Iowa near Mount Ayr (Shepherd 2019). This summarizes what most Iowa birders know about prairie-chickens in Iowa. However, we believe that the story is more complex than that and deserves further discussion.

In this paper we discuss two aspects of Greater Prairie-Chicken biology. One is an often-overlooked behavior that at least some of the birds were migratory. Those migratory flocks were important both for augmenting the resident population during winter and for prolonging the appearance of abundance of prairie-chickens in Iowa even after the nesting populations had declined drastically. Here we summarize what we know about the migratory movements of prairie-chicken in the 1800s and early 1900s and how those movements probably affected our understanding of prairie-chicken populations in Iowa.

Since the extirpation of the last breeding populations in Iowa, a second interesting aspect of prairie-chicken biology has emerged. This is the appearance of a few vagrant birds, mostly in winter, suggesting that a few individuals from neighboring states retain some level of the migratory urge that was so common in the late 1800s.

## PRAIRIE-CHICKENS AS A MIGRATORY BIRD

The migratory movements of prairie-chickens were well known to early settlers and hunters with numerous reports of large flocks moving south in late fall and returning north in spring. One of the first to comment on the scope of this migration was W. W. Cooke, the leading expert on bird migration in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Based on reports he received from a network of observers, he concluded that large flocks of prairie-chickens would leave southern Minnesota and northern Iowa in November and December and move south to spend the winter in southern Iowa and northern Missouri. They would return north the next March and April. He also reported, as did others, that

female prairie-chickens were more likely than males to migrate (Cooke 1885). The timing and intensity of these movements varied somewhat from year to year, but weather conditions in the north and the amount of food available probably were important factors.

Several Iowans have described their observations of these migrating birds. An observer in Charles City remembered seeing large flights of prairie-chickens as they passed overhead, always moving to the southeast in the fall and to the northwest in spring. The flights occurred at dusk and in the early morning with scattered flocks passing low as they just cleared the tops of houses and trees (Williams 1884). Another individual described fall flights of prairie-chickens migrating past Vinton, coming from the northwest in the evening, flying about 20 to 50 feet above ground, and again just clearing the tops of trees and houses as they moved southeast and returning in the opposite direction in the spring (Keagle 1890).

Elmer Hinshaw, who was born in Lyon County and spent much of his life in the Spirit Lake area, recalled that in the late 1800s he saw swarms of prairie-chickens moving south in the fall near Spirit Lake. They seemed to follow flyways, generally not crossing water but going around the lakes. Hinshaw and other hunters would take advantage of that behavior, stationing themselves at narrow passes between lakes and hunting when the birds passed by at dawn and shortly before sundown. He often was able to shoot 20–25 birds without moving although thousands more prairie-chickens passed by on each side of him (Thompson 1937).

Aldo Leopold, who grew up in Burlington, described a similar situation along the Mississippi River bottoms in southeastern Iowa. A favorite hunting place was on the north edge of Burlington where North Hill Bluff projected out onto the floodplain, interrupting the flightpath of prairie-chickens flying south over the bottomlands. The birds, reluctant to fly over the high bluff or over the Mississippi River itself, often would land in trees on the bluff and were easy targets for hunters who knew of their habits (Leopold 1931).

In the late 1800s when prairie-chicken populations in Iowa were at their peak, these flocks from the north augmented the resident nesting birds and to some extent masked their decline. In fact both the resident birds and the migrant flocks were declining and although some alarm was raised about that loss, it wasn't until the decline of both became so severe that many realized that the species was about to disappear from Iowa.

## PRAIRIE-CHICKENS IN IOWA, 1900–1960

After years of heavy hunting pressure and the loss of most of Iowa's native prairie, by the early 1900s the "golden years" for prairie-chickens in Iowa had passed. Much of Iowa's native prairie, which provided nesting habitat for prairie-chickens, had been converted to agricultural uses and nesting populations were declining rapidly in Iowa. The decline of Iowa's nesting population of prairie-chickens was somewhat masked by the migrant birds that continued to come to Iowa to spend the winter, providing the impression that prairie-chick-



ens were still doing well. Even then, some prairie-chickens continued to move south into Iowa in winter such as large flocks that appeared in the Skunk River bottoms in Jasper County in 1911 (Sloanaker 1912). The hunting season for prairie-chickens in Iowa was closed in 1917 and still their numbers continued to decline. In a February 1930 interview, former State Game and Fish Commissioner Elmer Hinshaw noted that whereas in the past at this time of year you could commonly see flocks of up to 300 prairie-chickens wintering in the Spirit Lake area, this past fall and winter (1929–1930) he hadn't seen more than a dozen birds (Thompson 1937).

Prior to the 1940s, relatively few Christmas Bird Counts were held in Iowa and other than counts in Sioux City and Pierson, most were in eastern and central Iowa, away from the Greater Prairie-Chicken's strongholds in north-central and northwestern Iowa (Dinsmore 1993). Even so, prairie-chickens were found on Iowa Christmas Bird Counts up through the 1930s. Counts of 127 in December 1921 at Emmetsburg, 27 there in December 1922, and a flock of 30 in December 1932 at Pierson in Woodbury County indicate that flocks were still found. The only CBC reports after that were a few at Ogden in Boone County and at Sioux City in 1930, at Ogden during the count week in 1932, and one at Pierson and four at New Hartford in Butler County, both in 1939 (Dinsmore 1993).

Wintering flocks continued to be reported in Iowa into the 1930s but by then the birds were mainly found in northern and especially northwestern Iowa (Leopold 1931). A flock of 55 in February 1930 near Winthrop in Buchanan County (Pierce 1940) was late for northeastern Iowa. Youngworth (1936) noted that the fall flight in 1928 was the largest that he had ever seen and another good flight occurred in 1934–35. Stempel and Rodgers (1961) summarized a number of the last reports of flocks of wintering prairie-chickens including about 50 near Harris in Osceola County in about 1934, an estimated 500 wintering near Livermore in Humboldt County from 1935–1940, and many fall migrants near Sioux City in 1943. Wolden (1946) reported 9 in October 1946 in Emmet County. Soon, however, those flocks seemed to have disappeared. Reports of a few wintering birds continued into the 1950s with a report from Howard County in 1952 and in several other counties in 1953. A small flock in 1960 at Willow Slough in Mills County seems to be the last report of a wintering flock in Iowa (Stempel and Rodgers 1961). Apparently the last of the wintering birds were one in January 1960 between Aurora and Winthrop in Buchanan County (Bordener 1960), one in January 1962 in Sioux City (Youngworth 1962), and two reports of one or 2 birds in late November 1965 near Hamburg in Fremont County (Brown 1966).

A similar pattern of rapid disappearance occurred with the resident nesting populations. By the mid-1930s Youngworth (1936) listed 37 counties which he thought still had breeding prairie-chickens but he provided few specific data. Most were in northern Iowa from Winneshiek and Fayette counties west to Dickinson and Clay counties and in south-central Iowa near the Missouri border from Davis west to Decatur counties. The latter birds were part of a

large population remaining in northern Missouri. A few were found scattered elsewhere in the state. By the 1940s, the only area of the state that consistently had nesting prairie-chickens was southern Iowa, especially Appanoose and Wayne counties, where nesting birds persisted into the 1950s with the last nest found in 1952. By the 1950s, however, those flocks had disappeared and the last known nesting population in Iowa had died out. The last booming male there was heard in 1955 in Appanoose County (Stempel and Rodgers 1961).

PRAIRIE-CHICKENS IN IOWA SINCE 1960

With the disappearance of both the last resident birds and the wintering flocks by the early 1960s, the Greater Prairie-Chicken was considered extirpated from Iowa. Since then, any prairie-chickens found in Iowa, other than those associated with the recent releases of birds in southern Iowa (see Shepherd 2019), likely wandered here from elsewhere, most likely Nebraska, Minnesota, or the Dakotas. Thus the appearance of a few prairie-chickens in Iowa in recent years suggests that some individuals still have some tendency to move from their nesting areas into Iowa. Here we summarize the information available to support that statement.

In our review of back issues of *Iowa Bird Life* from 1960 to the present day we found ten generally well-described records of apparent vagrant prairie-chickens in Iowa (Table 1). All were of single birds (including both females and males), all between the dates of 11 December and 19 May, and all were in northwestern and west-central Iowa. The first was in 1979 and the most recent was in 2020.

Table 1. Reports of vagrant Greater Prairie-Chickens in Iowa, 1979 to present

Date	Location	Comments	Reference
7 Feb 1979	near Pisgah, Harrison Co.	Sight record	Schaufenbuel (1979)
2 Jan 1984	near Ocheyedan, Osceola Co.	Photographed	Spengler (1984)
11 Dec 1992	n of Larchwood, Lyon Co.	Caught by dog, specimen to ISU	Eby (1993)
4 Jan–5 Apr 1994	near Cherokee airport, Cherokee Co.	Seen by many, photographed	Bierman (1994)
22 Jan 2001	n of Rock Rapids, Lyon Co.	Roadkill, specimen to Lyon CCB	Cecil (2001)
15 May 2001	near Lawton, Woodbury Co.	Roadkill	Kenne (2001)
9 Jan 2003	Osceola Co.	Sight record	Cecil (2003)
19 May 2007	Near Chatsworth, Plymouth Co.	Sight record	Kenne (2007)
31 Dec 2016–5 Jan 2017	Kingsley, Plymouth Co.	Photographed	Moore (2017)
1 Mar 2020	e of Westfield, Plymouth Co.	Photographed	<i>vide</i> Matt Wetrich

By month, two were found in December and May, four in January, and one each in February and March (Table 1). Eight of the 10 were seen only one day and by one or two people. Of the others, one was seen by many near Cherokee from January to April 1994 and the other was seen in Kingsley several days in late December 2016 and early January 2017. The ten records come from six counties with three records from Plymouth County, two each from Lyon and Osceola counties, and single records from Cherokee, Harrison, and Woodbury counties. Eight of the ten were from the five northwestern-most counties in Iowa, and the other two were from counties further south along Iowa's western border. At least four of the birds were photographed and two others were preserved as specimens. It is tempting to think that some innate tendency that brought thousands of prairie-chickens to Iowa every year a century ago is still capable of occasionally bringing one to Iowa now.

These 10 records are tantalizing in several ways. First, their seasonal timing generally matches those of the wintering flocks of more than a century ago. Eight of the 10 were seen from early December to early March, generally matching when flocks of wintering prairie-chickens were in Iowa in the past. The only bird that was seen for an extended period was present from early January to early April also matches the times when wintering prairie-chickens historically were in Iowa.

The two May birds are more problematic. They may have been in Iowa but remained unseen for several months or could have arrived more recently. Late March and April are the peak months for prairie-chickens to be at their display grounds, and these two birds may have dispersed from display grounds in neighboring states, a not uncommon dispersal pattern for the species.

## SOURCE OF WANDERING BIRDS

An obvious question is: What is the source of these birds? The bird found in 1979 occurred before Iowa had begun its prairie-chicken restoration program, so it had to come from out of state, most likely from Nebraska or South Dakota. Starting with the bird from Osceola County in 1984, the remaining nine reports came after birds were released in Iowa. However, other than the first few releases in Monona County, the rest were all in southern Iowa, especially Ringgold County near the Missouri border and far from where these recent birds were found. Although Greater Prairie-Chickens released in Iowa have shown some tendencies to wander (Vogel et al. 2015), we believe that it is unlikely that those birds would have wandered that far north in mid-winter to be found in northwestern Iowa. The consistent pattern of occurrence in western and northwestern Iowa suggests they are part of a historical dispersal pattern. We therefore believe that it is far more likely that they came from populations in the Dakotas, Minnesota, or perhaps Nebraska.

## DISCUSSION

To current readers, it is easy to understand how a species like the Greater Prairie-Chicken, which was once abundant in Iowa, could be extirpated from

the state given the widespread habitat loss. The twin factors of the rapid disappearance of the prairie grassland habitat that the species depended upon and the extensive exploitation of prairie-chickens for food were obviously too much for the species to overcome.

The end of prairie-chicken hunting in Iowa in 1917 (Dinsmore 1994) did little to halt its decline and prairie-chicken numbers in Iowa continued to drop. A number of Great Plains/Midwestern states continued hunting prairie-chickens after hunting in Iowa ceased, but currently only six states have a hunting season. Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota all have hunting seasons with a harvest in the thousands of birds annually. Three other states, North Dakota, Colorado, and Minnesota, have limited hunting opportunities with much smaller harvests and more restricted hunting zones (Johnson et al. 2020).

Greater Prairie-Chickens require large blocks of open grassland habitat, something that Iowa has attempted to recreate with limited success. Other states such as Illinois, Missouri, and Wisconsin have faced similar issues and have been able to maintain small remnant populations (Johnson et al. 2020). To date, the Iowa reintroduction program has not been as successful as was originally hoped. Several times, after some initial success, the prairie-chicken numbers have slowly dwindled and additional birds have been added to augment the population. The current reintroduced population has persisted for four years but has not really grown, and their long-term success is still in doubt.

Recent studies of population movements and migration by prairie-chickens in other states suggest that such movements generally involve short distances by few birds (Johnson et al. 2020). However, some of Iowa's historic records suggest that fairly large numbers of birds migrated and that they moved fairly long distances, perhaps hundreds of miles. The role that migrant prairie-chickens had in Iowa's original population has escaped much attention. It is not clear if any of the wintering birds ever stayed in Iowa and augmented the nesting population, or they all migrated back north in the spring. If the former was true, at best they may have delayed the extirpation of Greater Prairie-Chickens from Iowa but they clearly didn't prevent it from happening.

## SUMMARY

In the late 1800s, Greater Prairie-Chickens were an abundant bird in Iowa. Vast numbers nested on Iowa's prairies, and thousands were killed for local consumption or to ship to distant markets. Those populations were augmented every fall by large numbers of migrant birds from the north and west which spent the winter in Iowa. Most writers have noted the rapid demise of the nesting population in the late 1800s and early 1900s but few have mentioned that migrant birds continued to move into Iowa at least as late as the early 1950s. Both the resident and migrant populations were declining but the continued arrival of migrant birds apparently somewhat masked the loss of the resident population. By the mid-1950s, other than an occasional winter straggler, the species had been extirpated from Iowa. We describe ten such stragglers in Iowa since 1970 and suggest that these birds, likely derived from states to the



north or west of Iowa, seemingly indicate the continued presence of some tendency for at least a few birds to continue to migrate south in fall.

Although the native Greater Prairie-Chickens disappeared from Iowa almost 60 years ago, there probably still are a few living Iowans who saw those original birds during their childhood years in the 1920s–1950s. To the best of our knowledge, the only living I.O.U. member to see one of those birds in Iowa is Eugene Armstrong, who had one pointed out to him by his father on their farm near Booneville (Cecil 1991), probably in the 1930s.

This article would not have been possible without the reports and recollections of many observers, some from more than 100 years ago. We thank them all, both those in the distant past and the more recent years, whose observations have allowed us to try to retrace part of the history of this interesting and iconic bird.

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Horned Lark, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 2 February 2020. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.

## Birding Area: Purple Martin Lake Water Resource Area

*Tom Dougherty*

Purple Martin Lake Water Resource Area is one of Polk County's newest birding spots and in the space of just a couple of years has already recorded an impressive 163 species. This recreational area is owned by the Des Moines Water Works (DMWW) and was previously a quarry. The lake also supplies water to the customers of the DMWW. The area offers birding and hiking along with canoeing and kayaking. In exchange for allowing the public access to the area, Iowa's Department of Natural Resources agreed to manage the property on behalf of the DMWW as an extension of the nearby Walnut Woods State Park. The project also had the cooperation of the City of West Des Moines and the Friends of Walnut Woods State Park.

The park is conveniently located northeast of the intersection of Interstate 35 and Highway 5, has ample parking, and usually has a portable restroom available. Access the site from Highway 5, taking the exit at Southeast 35th Street and going north to Army Post Road, then west to the end of the road. As the name implies, Purple Martins are a prominent feature of the lake as the martin houses are located by the parking area and there are even stadium bleachers available for viewing the martins. This year's first Purple Martin was seen on 19 March and the martin managed to survive several chilly nights later



*Figure 1. Harris's Sparrow, Purple Martin Lake, Polk, 25 October 2019. Photograph by Tom Dougherty, Urbandale, IA.*

that week. Recent eBird reports show that typically 25–30 martins are seen on any given day during the spring.

In addition to the Purple Martin houses, there are about 20 bluebird boxes spread out along the walking trails to the east and west of the parking areas. Having walked the trail several times, I can vouch that the Tree Swallows enjoy the well-maintained nest boxes, too.

Ospreys also take advantage of nearby man-made structures for nesting. A cell phone tower on the southeast boundary of the area has been used by a pair of Ospreys over the last few years.

As you drive the last quarter mile of Army Post Road before reaching the parking lot, be sure to check out the habitat on the north side of the road. Plenty of sparrows and woodland birds can be seen and heard along this stretch. In 2019, I even saw a Red-shouldered Hawk in this area. Once you are at the parking area, enjoy the Purple Martins, Eastern Bluebirds, and Tree Swallows but also check the shrubs that border the lot. I have seen Harris's Sparrows

(Figure 1), White-crowned Sparrows, and Yellow-throated Vireos while barely leaving my car.

Viewing waterfowl is also easy as a nice, clear view of the lake is just steps from the parking lot. Although the lake is not huge, if you have a scope, bring it along because the birds often seem to congregate at the north end of the lake. The lake sees mainly diving ducks in the springtime with mergansers, scaup, and Common Goldeneyes the most common species. Dabbling ducks occasionally drop by but are somewhat less common. A few swans have been recorded here but are seen much more regularly and in greater numbers at nearby Dale Maffitt Reservoir.

To the west of the parking area is a wooded area bordering a short stretch of Army Post Road that is not open to vehicle traffic. This area provides great woodland habitat worth checking. A well-maintained trail also leads to the west of the parking lot and continues around the west side of the lake. This area provides grassy habitat along with close-by wooded areas for easy viewing and listening.

Although not as popular a warbler spot as areas around Saylorville Lake, the lake has seen many notable species, including a not-often seen or heard Connecticut Warbler in 2018. Other migrant warblers recorded here include Golden-winged, Orange-crowned (Figure 3), Mourning, Magnolia, and Chestnut-sided.



Figure 2. Orange-crowned Warbler, Purple Martin Lake, Polk, 25 October 2019. Photograph by Tom Dougherty, Urbandale, IA.

The wooded areas around the parking area and lake offer many opportunities to find other interesting species including Bell's, Blue-headed, and Philadelphia vireos, Willow Flycatchers, and both Baltimore and Orchard orioles.

Purple Martin is a great location whether you only have 15–20 minutes to do some birding or if you plan to spend an hour or two. Scoping the lake for waterfowl and checking the area around the parking lot is quick and easy and you may be surprised how many species you can see in a short amount of time. If you have more time for a hike, walking the trails either on the east or west side of the lake will add to your birding opportunities.

To learn more about Purple Martin Lake Water Resource Area, check out the eBird page for this site. Go to: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L6211053>. To see a bar chart of species that have been seen here week by week throughout the year, just click the link for “Bar Charts” on this same web page.

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## Field Reports—Winter 2019–2020

*Francis Moore*



*Francis Moore*

### WEATHER

Average temperatures for December were unseasonably warm statewide with the warmest conditions across eastern Iowa; departures were up to eight degrees above normal. Iowa's northwest corner experienced departures ranging from two to four degrees above normal as well. The longest stretch of unseasonable warmth lasted from 18–31 December. December's statewide average maximum temperature was 38.1°F, 6.4°F above normal while the minimum temperature was 19.6°F, 5.5°F above normal. The month's high temperature of 64°F was reported on 25 December at Centerville *Appanoose*, Keosauqua *Van Buren*, and Lamoni *Decatur*. This reading was on average 30°F warmer than normal. Lake Park *Dickinson* recorded the lowest morning temperature of the month with a –6°F reading on 12 December, 18 degrees below average. Much of the southeastern two-thirds of Iowa experienced near to below average precipitation during December with east central Iowa reporting up to one inch deficits. Measurable snowfall was also reported across the state though totals were below average statewide; the average snowfall was 2.4 inches, 5.9 inches below average, tying 1900 as the 20th least snowy December in 132 years of records. Temperatures averaged 29.1°F or 6.2°F above normal making December 2019 the 25th warmest on record. Precipitation averaged 1.28 inches or 0.06 inches less than normal ranking it as the 87th driest. A warmer December last occurred in 2015 while a drier one was last recorded in 2017.

Statewide average temperatures in January were unseasonably warm. Eastern Iowa experienced the warmest conditions, where positive departures of up to six degrees were reported in the monthly averages. Western Iowa was still warmer than average, though only by a few degrees above the 30-year average. January's statewide average maximum temperature was 30.1°F, 1.9°F above normal while the minimum temperature was 15.2°F, 5.0°F above normal. The month's high temperature of 63°F was reported on 9 January in Bloomfield *Davis* and Centerville *Appanoose*. This temperature was on average 31°F warmer than normal. Logan *Harrison* recorded the lowest morning temperature of the month with a –16°F reading on 21 January, 26 degrees below average. A majority of cities across Iowa reported above average precipi-

tation with the largest positive departures of one to two inches across southern portions of the state. The first measurable snowfall of 2020 occurred across much of Iowa on 2–3 January. Northern Iowa was blanketed with the heaviest totals, as anywhere from four to six inches was reported across the first few north-central tiers of counties. The most widespread snowfall event occurred on 17–18 January as a strong low pressure system moved through Iowa. Snow totals across much of the state were in the three to six inch range with higher totals in northern Iowa. The final widespread event occurred mainly on 22–23 January as a stubborn low pressure system moved through northern Missouri. Measurable snow was reported statewide, though Iowa's southeastern quadrant observed totals of three to six inches. Temperatures averaged 23.0°F or 3.6°F above normal while precipitation averaged 1.27 inches or 0.35 inches more than normal. January 2020 ranks as the 39th wettest and 38th warmest in 148 years of observational records. A warmer and wetter January last occurred in 2017.

Average temperature departures varied across Iowa during February. Western Iowa and parts of the southeastern quadrant experienced the warmest conditions, where positive departures of one to two degrees were reported in the monthly averages. Colder than normal conditions were experienced along the Iowa-Minnesota border, though by only a few degrees below the 30-year average. February's statewide average maximum temperature was 34.1°F, 0.3°F above normal while the minimum temperature was 14.5°F, 0.1°F below normal. In terms of monthly temperature extremes, the warmest daytime high of 64°F was reported on 23 February at multiple cities in southern Iowa; this reading was on average 24°F above normal. Cresco *Howard* reported the coldest overnight low of -28°F on the morning of 20 February. This reading was 38°F below average. For the month, much of Iowa also experienced below normal snowfall with the average statewide total of 3.3 inches, 3.5 inches below average. Only sections of the northernmost two tiers of counties reported above average totals. This ties 1984 as the 23rd lowest snow total for February, based on 133 years of records; Osage *Mitchell* reported the highest total of 12.6 inches, double its normal February average. The lowest reported totals were found at multiple locations in southwestern Iowa; the readings amounted to a trace of snow. Temperatures averaged 24.3°F or 0.3°F above normal while precipitation totaled 0.43 inch, 0.62 inch below normal. February 2020 was the 18th driest and ties 1951 as the 62nd warmest in 148 years of statewide observational records. A warmer February last occurred in 2017 while a drier one last occurred in 2006.

Iowa temperatures for the three winter months of December, January, and February averaged 25.5°F or 3.4°F above normal while precipitation totaled 2.98 inches, 0.33 inch less than normal. This ranks as the 26th warmest and 61st driest winter among 148 years of records. With a preliminary average of 16.9 inches of snowfall, winter 2019–2020 was the 42nd least snowy in 133 years of records.

## GENERAL TRENDS

Goose numbers were below average with puddle duck numbers a little above average. Some diving ducks were above average and some were below their average numbers during the season. Highest numbers of waterfowl reports were from December and late February with fewer found in January, as is usually the case during winter. Overall duck numbers were below average during the period, with most of the reports and higher numbers showing up in early December and after 15 February. This year only two of the scoter species were found along with the usual Long-tailed Ducks.

Most gallinaceous bird numbers were higher compared to last year with almost all showing above average and numbers increasing from last year. There were only nine reports for Northern Bobwhite and 20 for Gray Partridge, indicating that Gray Partridge are still holding their own while Northern Bobwhite numbers are still on the low side. American White Pelicans were found in good numbers at Red Rock and Saylorville Reservoirs with lower numbers found at the locks and dams along the Mississippi River. Turkey Vulture reports were unusually high this year with quite a few (seven of the ten) showing up in early migration in Feb. The number of reports for Bald Eagles was one and a half times higher than last year after quadrupling the year before. Eagles were found in good numbers along the Mississippi River and at the Army Corps of Engineer impoundments as usual. Reports of *Accipiters* were good this season with above average numbers of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks this winter. There were three times the number of Northern Shrikes this year compared to last year and were found mostly in the northern two-thirds of the state.

Gull reports were about the same as last year with most reports coming from December and early January. For northern owl species, only one Snowy Owl was found, with higher reports of Northern Saw-whet Owls. Long-eared Owl numbers were double the number from last year and Short-eared Owls were more numerous in December and early January with a higher number of reports compared to last year. Almost twice as many Merlins were reported this year with good numbers of Peregrine and Prairie falcons reported.

Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings were more numerous in December and January with a few records from February, mostly in the northern and central parts of the state. There were fewer reports of longspurs and buntings than last year and about the same number of reports of Horned Larks. There were good numbers of wintering sparrows throughout the period. Blackbirds made a good showing throughout the period with a Yellow-headed Blackbird reported again this year. Winter finch numbers this winter were down again from last year with reports of both crossbills this year. There was only one report of Common Redpoll this year, making them almost impossible to find. There were less than one-third as many reports of Pine Siskins and reports of Red-breasted Nuthatch indicated more normal numbers this year. Eurasian Tree Sparrows continue to expand their range with several found in Winneshiek, Butler, and Delaware counties.

## UNUSUAL SPECIES

The Records Committee accepted records of five species this winter, all of them casual in the state: Harlequin Duck, California Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Mountain Bluebird, and Varied Thrush. There were several unusual birds found this winter including Cinnamon Teal, Black Scoter, Pacific Loon, Spotted Towhee, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Northern Waterthrush, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Indigo Bunting.

## COMMENT

I really appreciate everyone submitting reports and providing material for this report. It was good to see nice details on some of the rarer species come with the documentations that were submitted. Please continue to provide these details for both rare species and common species on unusual dates. Without this information some species cannot be included in the report and an important report might be left out of the records that should be included; only the person actually seeing the bird can provide such details. Details can be a short physical description of the bird that allows for separation from any similar species. For many species, this can be one sentence. It doesn't take much to point out the relevant features to give some confidence that the bird was seen well and properly identified. Please take the time to make yourself aware of when some of our species are out of season and take short notes to make sure of the record.

Please keep entering your records on the Iowa Ornithologists' Union website so that they can continue to be added to the archives and be a part of our long-term database. There were 802 reports of 124 species entered into the IOU database this year by 40 observers at 210 locations in 52 counties over a total of 86 days (compared to 550 reports last year of 141 species by 40 observers from 49 counties at 137 locations). We are also able to integrate eBird records into this report by downloading those records from the eBird database and merging it into the Iowa Ornithologists' Union records. There were 47,468 records from eBird this season that were merged into the regular IOU records, which made the entire output very large and made the total records more inclusive.

## SPECIES DATA

ALL CAPS = Casual or Accidental. \* = documented, ph = photo. County names are in *italics*. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **ad** = adult, **CBC** = Christmas bird count, **imm** = immature, **juv** = juvenile, **L** = lake, **L&D** = lock and dam, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **NW&FR** = national wildlife and fish refuge, **P** = park, **Pl** = plumage, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **R** = river, **SP** = state park, **SRA** = state recreation area, **WA** = wildlife area.



**Snow Goose:** Highest numbers were 800 on 14 Dec at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (MG), 1000–4400 on 5–7 Feb near Burlington *Des Moines* (BW), and 35,000 on 29 Feb near Sioux City *Woodbury* (GLV).



Snow Goose, West Lake Park, Johnson, 1 January 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.

**Ross's Goose:** Seven reports this year with high counts of 15–40 on 5–7 Feb near Burlington *Des Moines* (BW) and 5 on 29 Feb near Rock Rapids *Lyon* (Alex Sundvall).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** One-fourth of the records were from Dec with another fourth from Jan and the rest from Feb. Highest numbers were 2000 on 24 Dec *Scott* (KJM), 2000 on 23 Feb at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (TW, DWa), 3000 on 26 Feb at Cone Marsh WA *Louisa* (SD), and 2000 on 29 Feb *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Cackling Goose:** There were 198 reports this year: Highest numbers were 85 on 13 Dec *Story* (SSP), 80 on 4 Jan *Story* (SSP), and 200 on 29 Feb at Dordt Prairie *Sioux* (KVZ).

**Canada Goose:** The largest concentrations were 8300 on 17 Dec at Green Valley SP *Union* (JG), 11,500 on 20 Dec at L Panorama *Guthrie* (RLC), and 7750 on 22 Dec at Green Valley SP *Union* (CJL).

**Mute Swan:** Two records this

winter: 1–2 ad on 10 Dec–16 Feb at L&D 14 *Scott* (BCC, RAS, TM, CKr, WV, SMF) and one ad on 25 Jan–22 Feb at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (TGS, KCR, AKO, WV).

**Trumpeter Swan:** There were 560 reports from around the state this winter, mostly in the east with numerous reports from the west and southwest. Highest counts were 337 on 19 Dec at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* (SJD), 300 on 6 Jan at Green Island WA *Jackson* (CKr, OK), and 500+ on 26 Jan at Brushy Creek SRA *Webster* (WO).

**Tundra Swan:** There were 67 reports with a high count of 42 on 16 Dec at L&D 10 *Clayton* (BR), 36 on 20 Dec *Jackson* (KJM), and 26 on 26 Jan at Green Island WA *Jackson* (BW).

**Wood Duck:** 19 reports this year after only 3 reports last year: Highest number: 10 on 1 Dec at Washington P *Black Hawk* (DH), 3 on 1 Dec at Pacific Junction *Mills* (Aisha Mitchell), and 6 on 6 Dec at Hospers *Sioux* (JDJ).

**Blue-winged Teal:** Two reports this season: One on 3 Dec at Mar Lee P *Johnson* (BCC, WV) and 2 on 24 Dec at Mississippi R *Scott* (KJM).



Cinnamon Teal, Iowa River Power Dam, Johnson, 14 February 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.

**Cinnamon Teal:** One ad alternate pl male on 14 Dec at Iowa R, Coralville *Johnson* (MHB, JDM, BCC, JMc, FB, DH, JBo).

**Northern Shoveler:** 40 reports this year after seven last year. Highest numbers reported: 25 on 2 Dec at Lily Pond, Amana *Iowa* (POR) and 20 on 3 Dec at Beemer's Pond *Hamilton* (ASp).

**Gadwall:** Reported throughout the period. There were 85 reports this year after 38 last year with highest numbers of 13 on 6 Jan at Green Island WA *Jackson* (DAS), 15 on 31 Jan at Montrose *Lee* (CO), and 17 on 8 Feb at Lansing *Allamakee* (Dan Winkler, Justin Nooker).

**American Wigeon:** There were 11 reports this winter after 7 last year with highs of 2 on 18 Dec at Davenport *Scott* (RAS), 2 on 23 Feb at Cedar L *Madison* (SBa), 1–2 on 29 Feb at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (AB, RJT, WWi), and 2 on 29 Feb at Green Island WA *Jackson* (DAS, CKr).

**Mallard:** The highest numbers reported were 2800 on 4 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JG), 12,000 on 8 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB), and 1500 on 21 Dec at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (CW).

**American Black Duck:** There were 73 reports this year after 17 last year with most coming from eastern and central Iowa and one from north-central Iowa. High numbers were 5 on 4 Jan at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS, KK) and 6 there on 5 Jan (CRE).

**Northern Pintail:** There were 68 reports for the period after 16 last year. High counts were 200 on 29 Dec at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JMc),

40 on 23 Feb at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (TW, DWa), and 19 on 25 Feb at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (BFH).

**Green-winged Teal:** There were 26 reports this year. High counts were 45 on 8 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB), 9 on 29–30 Jan at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (DSi), and 9 on 6 Feb at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (DSi).

**Canvasback:** A total of 55 reports were submitted this year after 45 last year with high counts of 60 on 15 Dec near Burlington *Des Moines* (WBi), 200 on 23 Dec at Bulger's Hollow *Clinton* (EEO), and 32 on 27 Feb at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (KH).

**Redhead:** High counts were 40 on 5 Dec at West Okoboji L *Dickinson* (JDJ), 22 on 25 Feb at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (BFH), and 24 on 28 Feb at Le Claire *Scott* (Jim Zervos).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Highest numbers were 25 on 5 Dec at West Okoboji L *Dickinson* (JDJ), 11 on 19 Jan at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (CD), 12 on 4 Feb at Harpers Ferry *Allamakee* (Joan Petersen), and 12 on 16 Feb near DeSoto *Dallas* (EP).

**Greater Scaup:** There were 12 reports this season after 11 last year with high counts of 4 on 8 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB), 3 on 31 Jan at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (CD), and 9 on 22 Feb at Stolley Gravel Pit *P Clay* (LAS).

**Lesser Scaup:** A total of 154 reports this winter after 55 last year. High counts: 30 on 1 Dec at Washington P *Black Hawk* (DH), 22 on 12 Dec at Ada Hayden Heritage P *Story* (Peter Miller), 30 on 18 Dec at Davenport *Scott* (RAS), and 22 on 29 Feb at L&D 14 *Scott* (SMF).

**HARLEQUIN DUCK:** One record: a subadult male 3–6 Dec at Briarstone L, Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (\*RGo, \*PH-ph, \*BVL-ph, \*WV-ph, MH, \*CW-ph, \*BCC-ph, \*POR, MP, JK).

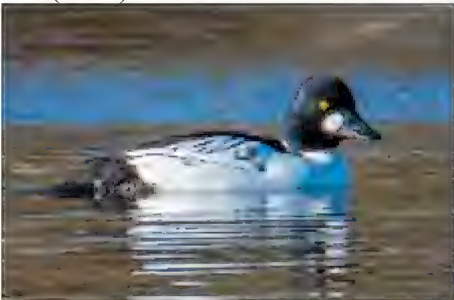
**Surf Scoter:** All: None reported this year.

**White-winged Scoter:** All: one female/juv on 1 Dec at Big Spirit L *Dickinson* (SJD), one female/juv on 7–15 Dec at Big Creek SP *Polk* (SJD-ph, JB-ph, TJD, JG-ph, BMW, RJT-ph, KF, CW-ph, TJD-ph, DyO), one ad male on 24 Dec at Mississippi R *Scott* (\*BLB, CTB).

**Black Scoter:** All: one female on 9 Jan at L&D 19 *Lee* (JLF).

**Long-tailed Duck:** Ten reports this year, most found along the Mississippi R. Highest numbers were 2 on 16 Dec at L&D 16 *Lee* (SJD) and 2 on 9 Jan at Ft. Madison *Lee* (JLF). The rest of the records were of single birds.

**Bufflehead:** There were 48 reports this year after 28 last year with highs of 70 on 5 Dec at West Okoboji L *Dickinson* (JDJ), 46 on 7 Dec at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS), and 20 on 23 Dec at Bulger's Hollow *Clinton* (EEO).



*Common Goldeneye, Mason City, Cerro Gordo, 4 December 2019. Photograph by Bruce G. McKee, Mason City, IA.*

**Common Goldeneye:** High

counts were 440 on 4 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JG), 350 on 5 Dec at West Okoboji L *Dickinson* (JDJ), and 300 on 21 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (KS).

**Hooded Merganser:** High counts: Seven on 3 Dec at Lily Pond, Amana *Iowa* (BCC), ten on 5 Dec at M. A. Ewalt RA *Johnson* (DH), and 7 on 12 Jan at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (Jocelyn Harrison).

**Common Merganser:** High counts: 3800–4200 on 13–14 Dec at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and 5000–11,800 on 8–15 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB, DyO).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** There were 12 reports this season after 12 last year. Highest numbers were 4 on 4 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JG), 2 on 7 Dec at Big Creek SP *Polk* (AB), and 2 on 14 Dec at Big Creek WA *Polk* (AB).

**Ruddy Duck:** There were 142 reports this year after ten reports last year with high counts of 46 on 3 Dec at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (Jordan LaBarr), 60 on 5 Dec at West Okoboji L *Dickinson* (JDJ), and 28 on 26 Jan at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (Keith Roragen).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Nine reports this winter compared to 4 last year with high counts of 3 on 3 Dec at Panora *Guthrie* (BTh), 6 on 17 Dec at near Creston *Union* (JG), and 3 on 3 Jan *Clinton* (KJM).

**Gray Partridge:** Twenty reports this year after 22 reports last season with highs of 13–14 on 18–30 Jan near Nevada *Story* (EEO, Donna Kuhn), 12 on 19–28 Jan *Cerro Gordo* (BVL, RGo.), 12 on 25 Jan near Independence *Buchanan* (WV), 14 on 28 Jan *Hardin* (RLC, DTh), and

12 on 30 Jan near Story City *Story* (JG).

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** There were 244 reports this year after 169 last year with the following high counts: 120 on 1 Jan *Woodbury* (GLV), 85 on 4 Jan near *Ida Grove* *Ida* (POR), and 75 on 26 Jan *Polk* (JB).

**Ruffed Grouse:** No reports this winter season after one report last year.

**Wild Turkey:** High: 45 on 15 Dec *Marion* (AB), 70 on 17 Dec near *Akron* *Plymouth* (POR), and 50 on 20 Jan near *Danville* *Worth* (Josiah Misselt).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Only 5 reports, 4 of them from the central and eastern part of the state and one from the west. All 5 of the reports were in December this year.

**Horned Grebe:** Two reports: One on 5 Dec at West Okoboji L *Dickinson* (JDJ) and one on 13 Dec at Sunset Pond *Des Moines* (JWR).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Highest counts were 102 on 14 Dec in rural *Kelly* *Story* (SSP), 72 on 1–4 Jan at Brenton feed lot *Dallas* (AB), and 343 on 1 Jan at Scranton *Greene* (CR).

**Mourning Dove:** High counts of 99 on 15 Dec at Goose L *Johnson* (MDR), 108 on 25 Dec *Buchanan* (KJM), 100 on 27 Dec at Cone Marsh WA *Louisa* (RJH, Adrian Burke), and 70 on 26 Dec *Muscatine* (KJM).

**American Coot:** There were 39 reports this season after 25 last year with highs of 7 on 4 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JG) and 150 on 5 Dec at West Okoboji L *Dickinson* (JDJ).

**Sandhill Crane:** There were 13

reports this winter with high counts of 6 on 1 Dec at Green Island WA *Jackson* (TM), 14 on 1 Dec at Cone Marsh WA *Louisa* (FB), and 5 on 13 Dec at Cone Marsh WA *Louisa* (JKe). Eight of the records were from Dec, 4 were from Jan and one was from Feb.

**Killdeer:** There were 29 reports after seven reports last year. Highest numbers were 6–11 on 25–26 Feb at Cone Marsh WA (FB, SD). All of the rest of the reports were of 1–3 birds.

**Franklin's Gull:** All: one alternate ad on 1 Dec at Spirit L landfill *Dickinson* (SJD), one alternate ad 24–26 Dec at Ottumwa P *Wapello* (JF, POR), and one alternate ad 1 Jan at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

**Ring-billed Gull:** Highest concentrations were 500–2420 on 1–8 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (ASp, JG, AB), 800–2000 on 2–7 Dec at Cedar L *Linn* (BT, JE), 2000–9800 on 4–12 Jan at Red Rock Res *Marion* (EEO, AB, JG, RLC), 600–800 on 9 Dec–27 Feb at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (KH), and 700 on 12 Jan at Ottumwa *Wapello* (AB).

**CALIFORNIA GULL:** Two records, one 3rd cycle 8 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (\*AB-ph) and one 3rd cycle 3–4 Jan at Red Rock Res *Marion* (\*JF-ph, EEO). These records are probably the same individual seen in two different months as noted by the Records Committee.

**Herring Gull:** High counts: 280 on 4 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JG), 550 on 8 Dec Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB), 280 on 13 Dec at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB), and 860 on 9 Jan at Red Rock Res *Marion* (RLC).

**Iceland Gull:** 109 reports this winter after 30 reports last year and



widely distributed in gull flocks at various large water impoundments and river dams around the state: Highest numbers: 8 on 12 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF), 8–11 on 24–26 Dec at Ottumwa *Wapello* (JF, POR), and 16 on 3 Jan at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF).



*Iceland Gull, Ottumwa, Wapello, 28 December 2019. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** There were 52 reports this winter for this species. This species was widely reported in gull flocks in central and eastern Iowa. High counts: 6 on 12 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF), 4 on 24 Dec at Ottumwa *Wapello* (JF), and 4 on 3 Jan at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF).

**Glaucous Gull:** There were 57 reports this winter after 2 last winter: Highest counts: 3 1st cycle 24–27 Dec at Ottumwa *Wapello* (JF, POR, RJT), 3 (one ad, 2 1st cycle) on 3 Jan at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF), and 3 (one 3rd cycle and 2 1st cycle) on 12–13 Jan at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB, JF).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:** All: One 1st cycle on 24–28 Dec at Ottumwa *Wapello* (\*JF-ph, SJD, MP, POR, RJT), and one 1st cycle on 1–5 Jan at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD-ph, \*AB-ph, MP, JG-ph).

**Pacific Loon:** One juv on 8–14 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD-ph).

**Common Loon:** One on 8 Dec at Comanche quarry *Clinton* (JF) and one on 4 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JG).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** There were ten reports: 1–5 on 2–21 Dec at Quad Cities *Scott* (RAS, HL, Jesse Ray), 2–8 on 19–20 Dec at Lower Hamburg Bend *Fremont* (SM, Jethro Runco), one on 25 Dec at Bob Kerry Pedestrian Bridge *Pottawattamie* (Gregory Estep, Susan Estep), and one on 13 Jan at Quad Cities *Scott* (KJM).

**American White Pelican:** There were 147 reports throughout the period after 78 last year, most below the dams at Saylorville Res *Polk* and Red Rock Res *Marion*. High counts were 160 on 21 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB), 175 on 5 Jan at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB), and 250 on 2 Feb at Red Rock Res *Marion* (ASp).

**Great Blue Heron:** There were 46 reports submitted after 60 last year with high counts of 17 on 2 Dec at Burlington *Des Moines* (JLF), 6 on 13 Dec at Burlington *Des Moines* (PEL), and 6 on 15 Feb at I-280 Bridge *Scott* (Jennifer Anderson-Cruz).

**Turkey Vulture:** There were ten reports this year, an unusually high number: High counts were: 3 on 9 Jan at Burlington *Des Moines* (JLF), 2 on 29 Feb at Iowa City *Johnson* (CRE),

and 15 on 29 Feb at Macbride Nature RA *Johnson* (Sydney Foster).

**Golden Eagle:** There were 13 reports: 2 in Dec, 7 in Jan, and 4 in Feb, with 4 from the eastern part of the state, 5 from the central part of the state and 4 from the western part of the state.

**Northern Harrier:** There were 312 reports this season after 146 last year with highs of 12 on 3 Dec *Woodbury* (GLV), 5 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 5 on 1 Jan at Owego Wetland Complex *Woodbury* (POR), and 5 on 16 Jan at Owego Wetland Complex *Woodbury* (BFH).



*Northern Harrier, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 5 January 2020. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** A total of 104 reports, 6 from western Iowa, 54 in central Iowa, and 44 from eastern Iowa.

**Cooper's Hawk:** A total of 227 reports this year after 184 last year,

with 99 from the central and 111 from the eastern section of the state and 17 from the west. Most reports were of single individuals with several records of 2 to 3 along the Mississippi R.

**Northern Goshawk:** Five reported this year: one imm 12–19 Dec *Worth* (RGo, BVL), one ad, one imm on 14 Dec at Diamond L *WA Dickinson* (LAS, JDJ), one on 21 Dec at Hawkeye *WA Johnson* (\*JMc-ph), one imm on 27 Dec near Owego Wetland Complex *Woodbury* (BFH), and one imm on 28 Feb near Burlington *Des Moines* (BWi).

**Bald Eagle:** There were 2033 reports after 1461 last year. High counts on the Mississippi R included 133 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM), 96 on 12 Jan *Scott* (KJM), and 92 on 13 Jan *Clinton* (KJM). High counts away from the Mississippi R were 200 on 17 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JaJ), 180 on 30 Dec at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JaJ), 170 on 19 Jan at Coralville L *Johnson* (RSM), and 245 on 22 Jan at Iowa River, Power Company Dam *Johnson* (MHB).

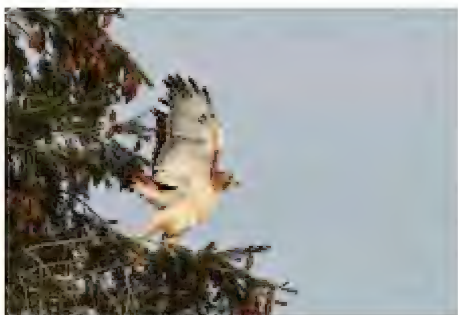


*Bald Eagle, Jasper, 6 February 2020. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** There were 66 reports after 52 last year with highs of 2 from eight locations and 4 on 23 Feb at George Wyth SP

*Black Hawk* (WV). Most reports were of one individual: 11 were from central, 51 from eastern, and 2 from western Iowa.

**Red-tailed Hawk:** There were 17 Harlan's/dark morph and only 2 Krider's/light morph individuals reported this winter. High counts were 12 on 15 Dec at Camp Dodge *Polk* (JG), 11 on 23 Dec *Pottawattamie* (Gail Fennell), and 25 on 3 Jan *Linn* (Ethan Muller, Michael Muller).



*Red-tailed Hawk, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 18 December 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*

**Rough-legged Hawk:** It was another great winter for this species with 263 reports totaling 341 individuals during the season. High counts: 5 on 24 Dec near Woodburn *Clarke* (JG), 6 on 28 Dec at Walnut Ridge WA *Bremer* (CPL), 5 on 5 Jan *Clayton* (KJM), one on 14 Jan *Woodbury* (POR), and 5 on 21 Jan near Humeston *Clarke* (JG). There were 16 dark morph individuals reported.

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** 66 reports for this common nocturnal species, with highs of 11 on 20 Dec *Jackson* (KJM), 6 on 21 Dec *Boone* (EEO), 6 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM), and 6 on 5 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

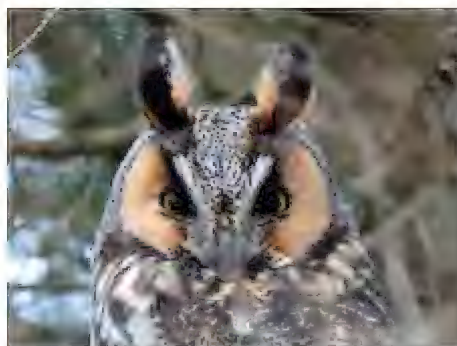
**Great Horned Owl:** There were 168 reports and a total of 211 indi-

viduals of this common species after 130 reports last year. Highs were 16 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM) and 11 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Snowy Owl:** This season there was only one report after 5 last year and 39 the year before: one on 27 Dec *Chickasaw* (CJL).

**Barred Owl:** There were 213 reports of this common species during the period after 153 last year. Highs were 8 on 15 Dec at Quad Cities *Scott* (KJM), 8 on 21 Dec *Boone* (EEO), and 10 on 25 Dec *Buchanan* (KJM).

**Long-eared Owl:** 34 reports this winter. Highest numbers: 9 on 15 Dec at Camp Dodge *Polk* (JG), 3 on 17 Dec at Three Mile L *Union* (JG), and 3 on 5 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).



*Long-eared Owl, Saylorville Wildlife Area, Boone, 11 January 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*

**Short-eared Owl:** A total of 43 reports from across the state. Highest numbers reported were: 7 on 15 Dec at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (Stephen Kirby), 5 on 1 Jan at Seed Savers Exchange *Winneshiek* (PDBS), 4 on 2 Jan near Lamoni *Decatur* (LW), and 4 on 4 Jan at Eastern Iowa Airport *Linn* (BT).

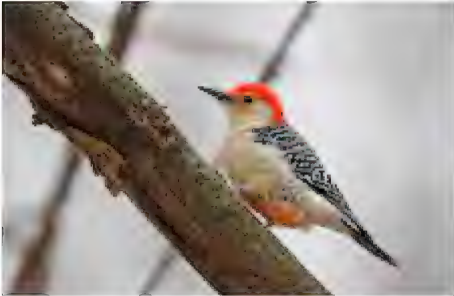
**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** A total of 56 Reports this winter: 3 on 21 Dec at Lime Creek Conservation



Area *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 2 on 25 Dec at *Buchanan* (KJM), 2 on 29 Dec at Hickory Hills P *Tama* (CPL), and 2 on 2 Jan at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (CPL). A majority of the reports were of single individuals, mostly found at four locations: Lime Creek Conservation Area, George Wyth SP, Moorehead Pioneer P, and Saylorville Res.

**Belted Kingfisher:** A total of 164 reports of 195 individuals, with high counts of 4 on 24 Dec at Mississippi R *Muscatine* (KJM) and 6 on 5 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** There were 340 reports this winter after 287 last year. Highs: 36 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 19 on 23 Dec *Louisa* (KJM), and 18 on 28 Dec at Ledges SP *Boone* (KJ).



*Red-bellied Woodpecker, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 17 December 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** There were 1961 reports after 1854 last year with highs of 49 on 15 Dec at Quad Cities *Scott* (KJM), 46 on 25 Dec *Buchanan* (KJM), and 44 on 5 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** There were 31 reports from all areas of the state. All reports were of a single individual of this species.

**Hairy Woodpecker:** There were

917 reports statewide after 915 last year with highs of 20 on 25 Dec *Buchanan* (KJM) and 22 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Northern Flicker:** A total of 528 reports were submitted after 319 last year with high counts of 22 on 15 Dec at Camp Dodge *Polk* (JG), 17 on 20 Dec *Jackson* (KJM), and 17 on 26 Dec near Woodburn *Clarke* (JG). There were also 2 hybrid yellow-shafted/red-shafted records: one on 1 Jan at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG) and one on 25 Jan at Hitchcock Nature Center *Pottawattamie* (SM).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** A total of 182 reports of 222 individuals after 140 reports last year, with all but one from the central and eastern sections of the state. Highs were 5 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM) and 5 on 5 Jan *Clayton* (KJM). The single record from the western part of the state was one on 19 Feb at DeSoto NWR *Pottawattamie* (Katie Gooby).

**American Kestrel:** There were 483 reports of a total of 696 individuals after 448 reports last year. High counts were 21 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM) and 22 on 5 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).



*Merlin, Glendale Cemetery, Polk, 26 February 2020. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*



**Merlin:** A total of 93 were reported after 53 last year from 32 counties with a high of 2 on 2 Dec–9 Jan at Aspen Grove Cemetery *Des Moines* (JLF, JWR), 2 on 19 Dec *Carroll* (WO), 2 on 22 Feb near Hamburg *Fremont* (JGi), and 3 on 29 Feb at Glendale Cemetery *Polk* (WWi). Of those that reported races there were 5 *F. c. columbarius* and 3 *F. c. richardsonii* reported this year.

**Peregrine Falcon:** All: 1 ad on 2 Dec–16 Feb at Mississippi R, Burlington *Des Moines* (JLF, JWR, BWi, Vollie Rifner), one ad on 25 Dec at *Des Moines Polk* (Jessica Dexter), 1 ad on 27 Dec–18 Jan at Quad Cities *Scott* (KJM, SMF, FSS, Michael McKinley), and one ad on 5–10 Feb at Dubuque *Dubuque* (CKr, TM).

**Prairie Falcon:** All: one on 13 Dec near Carroll *Carroll* (MTW), one on 27 Dec–16 Jan at Luton WA *Woodbury* (BFH, RTo, POR), one on 1 Jan near Coon Rapids *Greene* (VW, KGr), one on 22 Feb near Boone *Boone* (RLC), and one ad 22 Feb near Hamburg *Fremont* (JGi).



Northern Shrike, Big Creek Wildlife Area, Polk, 21 December 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.

**Northern Shrike:** There were 148 reports of 156 individuals this

winter with most of them scattered over the northern two-thirds of the state except these three from the southern third: 2 on 24 Dec near Woodburn *Clarke* (JG), 2 on 2 Jan at Little River L Campground *Decatur* (LW), and one on 11 Jan near Glenwood *Mills* (KH).

**Horned Lark:** There were 328 reports after 342 last year with highs of 270 on 10 Dec near Monona *Clayton* (BR, PDBS), 300 on 17 Jan near Adel *Dallas* (WWi), and 250 on 18 Jan near Emerson *Mills* (KH).

**Tufted Titmouse:** There were 486 reports after 388 last year with highs of 13 on 20 Dec *Jackson* (KJM), 20 on 5 Jan *Clayton* (KJM), and 14 on 27 Jan at Macbride Nature RA *Clayton* (BW).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** There were 40 reports of this species from throughout the state after 476 last year. After an invasion year last year this year's totals indicate more normal numbers for this species. Highs: 5 on 3 Dec at L Meyer P *Winneshiek* (LR), 5 on 28 Jan at Hampton Cemetery *Franklin* (RLC, DTh), 5 on 15 Feb at *Des Moines Polk* (KWa), and 5 on 16 Feb at East Lawn Cemetery *O'Brien* (JDJ).

**Brown Creeper:** There were 185 reports with 322 individuals included. The highest numbers were 11 on 19 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 8 on 20 Dec *Jackson* (KJM), and 8 on 2 Jan at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (CPL).

**Winter Wren:** There were 22 reports from throughout the period with a high count of 3 on 20 Dec *Jackson* (KJM) and 3 on 5 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Sedge Wren:** Only one report

of one on 15 Dec near La Porte City *Black Hawk* (WV-details).

**Carolina Wren:** There were 153 reports this season with a total of 220 individuals after 210 reports and 303 individuals last year. Most reports were of one or 2 individuals, mostly from the southern and eastern parts of the state, with high counts of 8 on 15 Dec at Quad Cities *Scott* (KJM), 4 on 19 Dec at Bulger's Hollow *Clinton* (KJM), and 3 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** 50 reports this season after 14 last year, most reports were of 1–3 individuals with a few higher counts. High counts were 5 on 20 Dec *Jackson* (KJM), 8 on 20 Dec at Pleasant Creek Unit Upper Mississippi R NW&FR *Jackson* (KJM), and 5 on 25 Jan at Hitchcock Nature Center *Pottawattamie* (SM).



*Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion, 8 December 2019. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** Ten reports this year after only one last year with a high of one ad male and one female on 20 Dec *Jackson* (\*KJM, \*Tammy Loussaert, Grant Wiegert).

**Eastern Bluebird:** There were 373 reports this year after 196 last

year with high counts of 31 on 20 Dec *Jackson* (KJM), 27 on 24 Dec near Woodburn *Clarke* (JG), 19 on 27 Jan at Coralville L *Johnson* (BH), and 19 on 4 Feb near Birmingham *Van Buren* (TMC, J G Chapman).

**MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD:** Two separate records: First record was of 2 birds, apparently an imm male and a female first found on 13 Dec and continuing until 28 Jan at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (\*DAS-ph, \*TM-ph, \*CW-ph, \*BCC-ph, \*CRE, \*MHB-ph, \*WV-ph, \*Mike Lucan-ph, \*MG-ph, m.ob.). A second record was of one bird on 5 Jan at Hitchcock Nature Center *Pottawattamie* (\*MG-ph).

**Townsend's Solitaire:** Two records this year: One on 21–26 Dec, continuing from the fall at Lime Creek Conservation Area *Cerro Gordo* (PH, RGo, BVL, KH-ph) and another one on 24 Feb at Oak Grove County P *Sioux* (LAS).

**Hermit Thrush:** Seven reports: highest 7 on 20 Dec *Jackson* (KJM), 2 on 15 Dec at Camp Dodge *Polk* (JG), and 2 on 9 Jan at Smith Wildlife Refuge *Pottawattamie* (KH).



*American Robin, Blackhawk Lake Wildlife Area, Sac, 29 February 2020. Photograph by Julie Johnston, Packwood, IA.*

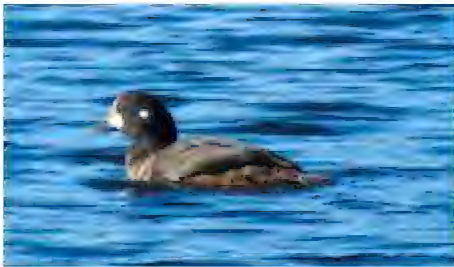
**American Robin:** Numbers this



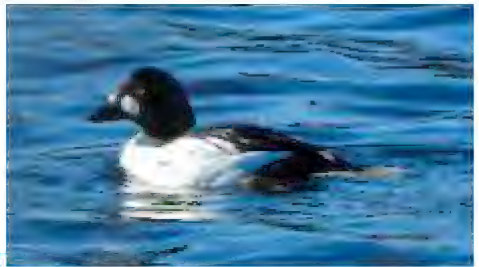
*Greater White-fronted Geese, Black Hawk Lake, Sac, 29 February 2020. Photograph by Julie Johnston, Packwood, IA.*



*American Black Duck, West Lake Park, Johnson, 1 January 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Harlequin Duck, Briarstone Lake, Mason City, Cerro Gordo, 4 December 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Common Goldeneye, Briarstone Lake, Mason City, Cerro Gordo, 4 December 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Hooded Merganser, Iowa River Power Dam, Johnson, 29 January 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*





*Common Merganser, Big Creek Wildlife Area, Polk, 5 December 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Ring-necked Pheasant, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 17 December 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*



*Cooper's Hawk, Ogden, Boone, 26 January 2020. Photograph by Douglas Harr, Ogden, IA.*



*Ring-necked Pheasant, Worth, 11 February 2020. Photograph by Bruce G. McKee, Mason City, IA.*



*Rough-legged Hawk, Madrid, Boone, 20 December 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*

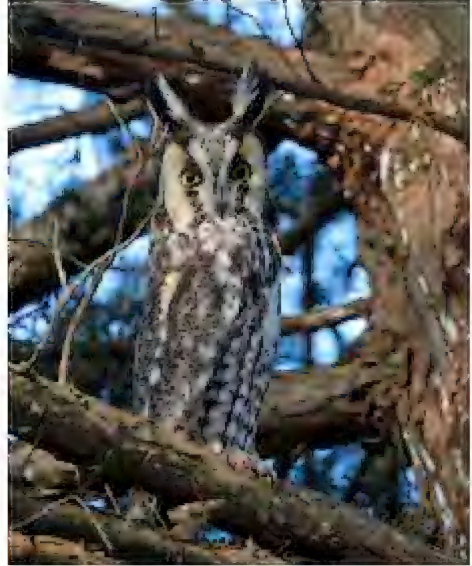


*Eastern Screech-Owl, Sparks Cemetery Area, Boone, 19 December 2019. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*





*Barred Owl, Ledges Park area, Boone, 27 December 2019. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Long-eared Owl, Hickory Hills, Tama, 11 February 2020. Photograph by Tom Schilke, Waterloo, IA.*



*Short-eared Owl, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 4 January 2020. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*



*Northern Saw-whet Owl, Moorehead Park, Ida, 1 January 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Mountain Bluebirds, John Deere Dike, Dubuque, 14 December 2019. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Hermit Thrush, Lee, 16 February 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*American Tree Sparrow, Harrier Marsh, Boone, 21 January 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Meadowlark sp., Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper, 2 December 2019. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*



*Cedar Waxwing, Sparks Cemetery Area, Boone, 16 February 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Song Sparrow, Harrier Marsh, Boone, 2 February 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Northern Cardinal, Mason City, Cerro Gordo, 10 February 2020. Photograph by Bruce G. McKee, Mason City, IA.*

winter were higher than last winter with 578 reports for the season, with high counts of 200 on 7 Jan at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (Don Stone), 210 on 22 Feb at Voas Nature Area *Dallas* (RCo), and 200 on 22 Feb at Saylorville Res *Dallas* (AB).

**VARIED THRUSH:** Two records this winter: one ad male 10–14 Jan at Mental Health Institute *Buchanan* (\*WV-ph, CPL-ph, MWe-ph, DGE, TM-ph, DAS, CKr) and one ad male 29 Dec–1 Feb at New Hartford *Butler* (DTh-ph, RLC, \*CPL-ph, RH-ph, HL-ph, Parker Coulter-ph).



*Brown Thrasher, Sparks Cemetery Area, Boone, 15 January 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

**Brown Thrasher:** Six records this winter: One on 6 Dec at Thorpe P *Winnebago* (LSR), one on 6 Dec at Bode *Humboldt* (JAN), one on 7 Dec–31 Jan at a residence in Ames *Story* (Todd & Stephany Burns), one on 13–26 Jan near Sparks Cemetery area *Boone* (LGD, EEO, WO), one on 29 Jan at Marion *Linn* (BP), and one on 1 Feb at Spencer *Clay* (LAS).

**Cedar Waxwing:** High counts were 320 on 15 Dec at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB), 295 on 15 Dec at Cemetery Rd *Johnson* (MHB), and 200 on 9 Jan at Browns L *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Wide-

ly reported along the Mississippi R and southeastern Iowa where high counts included 97 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 81 on 26 Dec *Muscatine* (KJM), and 70 on 31 Jan at Fairmont Cemetery *Scott* (SMF). In addition to the southeastern Iowa reports were: one on 8 Dec–2 Feb at L Meyer P *Winneshiek* (LR), 1–2 on 17 Jan–12 Feb at Greene *Butler* (BDB), and 3 on 5–24 Feb at Earlville *Delaware* (CKr, TM). There was also a report of 2 hybrid birds on 9 Feb at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB-ph).

**American Pipit:** One report of one on 6 Jan at Gray's L P *Polk* (JB).

**House Finch:** There were 1150 reports during the period after 854 last year. High counts were 52 on 24 Dec *Scott* (KJM), 62 on 25 Dec *Buchanan* (KJM), 80 on 1 Jan at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JBo), and 60 on 11 Jan near Rippey *Greene* (CR).

**Purple Finch:** There were a total of 85 reports after 250 last year. High counts were 10 on 17 Dec at Joy Hollow *Plymouth* (RWR), 10 on 5 Jan at Hitchcock Nature Center *Pottawattamie* (MG), and 10 on 16 Feb at DeSoto *Dallas* (EP).



*Purple Finch, Macbride Nature Recreation Area, Johnson, 29 February 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*

**Common Redpoll:** There was one report this year after 23 reports



last winter. One was found on 29 Feb at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Red Crossbill:** 25 reports this year from six locations, counts at each location were: 8–30 on 2 Dec–7 Feb at Graceland P Cemetery *Woodbury* (ALA, BFH, RTo, Matthew Schenck, Susan Schenck, James Isaac, POR), 1–15 on 15 Dec–28 Feb at Harlington Cemetery, Waverly *Bremer* (ALA, MWe, KCR, TM, WV, TGS, DGE, CPL), 2–8 on 6–20 Feb at Dordt Cemetery *Sioux* (KVZ, JK, Halley Pullman), 19 on 20 Jan at Sheldon Cemetery *O'Brien* (LAS), 2 on 16 Feb at Iowa City *Johnson* (Judy Troyer), and 16–23 on 16–20 Feb at East Lawn Cemetery *O'Brien* (JDJ, RLC).

**White-winged Crossbill:** One record of one male and 2 females on 29 Jan at Sutherland Cemetery *O'Brien* (LAS).

**Pine Siskin:** There were 66 reports this season after 354 reports last year and 97 the year before. High counts: 35 on 10 Dec at Fairmont Cemetery *Scott* (BCC), 68 on 15 Dec at Quad Cities *Scott* (KJM), 45 on 14 Jan at Dordt Prairie *Sioux* (KVZ), and 54 on 16 Feb at East Lawn Cemetery *O'Brien* (JDJ).

**American Goldfinch:** High counts: 51 on 15 Dec at Quad Cities *Scott* (KJM), 50 on 18 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), and 52 on 29 Feb *Pottawatamie* (Dominique De Caprona).

**Lapland Longspur:** There were 87 reports with high counts of 200 on 23 Dec *Palo Alto* (Perry So, AG), 375 on 29 Dec *Sioux* (JDJ), and 160 on 14 Jan near Slater *Story* (JG).

**Snow Bunting:** There were 47 reports this winter after 61 last winter. The largest numbers were 35 on

20 Jan near Dubuque *Dubuque* (KK), 92 on 25 Jan near Oxford *Johnson* (BWi), and 60 on 25 Jan near Cedar Rapids *Linn* (BT).

**Chipping Sparrow:** Eight reports representing an unusually high six records this winter: one ad on 22 Dec at Saylorville Res *Polk* (MHB-ph), one ad on 31 Dec–24 Jan at Quad Cities *Scott* (\*BLB, CTB), one on 9 Jan at Crapo P, Burlington *Des Moines* (JLF), one ad on 28 Jan–16 Feb at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS-ph), one ad on 12 Feb at Green Island WA *Jackson* (CKr, BW), and one ad 25 Feb near River Junction *Johnson* (FB-ph).

**Field Sparrow:** Seven reports this season after 13 last year: All: one on 18 Dec at F W Kent P *Johnson* (BCC-ph), one on 25 Dec at Scott County P *Scott* (Anne Geraghty), 2 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM, \*Mark Roberts), one on 27 Dec–30 Jan at Quad Cities *Scott* (\*BLB, CTB), one on 15–28 Jan at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS), one on 8 Feb at FDR P *Dubuque* (KK), and one on 16 Feb at Aldo Leopold WA *Bremer* (DGE).

**Fox Sparrow:** There were 18 reports for this species after 26 last year. High counts were 3 on 27 Jan at Coralville L *Johnson* (BH) and 2 on 23 Feb at Wilson L P *Lee* (Tom Ellsworth).

**American Tree Sparrow:** High counts: 158 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 638 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM), 158 on 20 Jan at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB), and 165 on 12 Feb at Green Island WA *Jackson* (CKr, BW).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** There were 18 Oregon race individuals reported.



High numbers reported were 437 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM) and 308 on 5 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).



Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco, Sugar Valley Boat Ramp, Boone, 2 February 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** There were 34 reports after 61 last year with high counts of four on 26 Dec *Muscatine* (KJM) and 6 on 5 Jan at Cone Marsh WA *Louisa* (JKe).

**Harris's Sparrow:** There were 62 reports after 46 last year a high count of 4 on 8 Dec at Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor *Story* (SSP).

**White-throated Sparrow:** There were 380 reports this winter after 563 last year. High counts were 38 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM) and 36 on 21 Dec *Linn* (KJM).

**Vesper Sparrow:** One report: one on 31 Dec–7 Jan at Errington Marsh WA *Polk* (RLC, good details).

**Savannah Sparrow:** Two records this season: One on 8 Dec–26 Jan at Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor *Story* (SSP) and one on 15 Dec at University of Iowa *Johnson* (TW, J Wawashkeshi, Matsunuri Sato).

**Song Sparrow:** There were 323 reports after 289 last year, mostly

from the eastern and central parts of the state. High counts were 20–21 on 31 Dec–26 Jan at Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor *Story* (SSP), 17 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM), and 18 on 6 Jan at Saylorville WA *Polk* (RLC).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** Two reports of one on 6 Dec at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JKe) and one on 7 Jan at Bays Branch WA *Guthrie* (CW).

**Swamp Sparrow:** There were 71 reports after 39 last year with a high count of 9 on 15 Dec at Polk City WA *Polk* (SSP).



White-crowned Sparrow, Sugar Valley Boat Ramp, Boone, 5 February 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

**Spotted Towhee:** There were 56 reports of six separate records this winter, a very good year to find this species compared to previous years: one on 1 Dec–13 Feb at Johnston *Polk* (DTh, RLC, BCC, RJT, CW, TJD), one on 9–10 Dec at Hard-scratch Springs Game Reserve *Harrison* (Paul Pearson), one on 16 Dec–4 Jan at Sioux City *Woodbury* (POR, BFH, RTo), one to two on 18 Jan–8 Feb at Sugar Valley Boat Ramp near Madrid *Boone* (EEO, RJT, BMW, VW, KF, CW, DyO, JG, Anna Burkardt, BTh, DCH, TMH), one on 20 Jan–29 Feb near Winterset Res *Mad-*

ison (Eric B), and one on 22 Jan–29 Feb at Madrid *Polk* (PF, SBa).



Spotted Towhee, Sugar Valley Boat Ramp, Boone, 21 January 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.

**Eastern Towhee:** 19 reports for ten records: one 15 Dec at Quad Cities *Scott* (KJM), 4 on 17 Dec *Clin-ton* (KJM), one 25 Dec *Buchanan* (KJM), one on 4 Jan at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (SCS), one on 12–22 Jan at Fisher Residence, Madrid *Polk* (PF), one on 17 Jan at Jefferson County P *Jefferson* (TMC), 3 on 23 Jan at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JTi), one on 26 Jan at Decatur rest stop, I-35 *Decatur* (LJK), one 27 Jan–4 Feb at Mystic *Appanoose* (TNJ), and one 9 Feb at Solon *Johnson* (CRE).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** One on 1 Dec at a private residence *Har-rison* (CD).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Three reports this winter with vocalizations after one last year. Two with song were heard on 21 Dec at Nevada *Story* (PF), one vocalized on 5 Jan at Grimes *Polk* (EEO), and one was seen and heard on 12 Feb near Bel-leview *Jackson* (CKr).

**Western Meadowlark:** There were nine reports this winter with only two noting vocalizations: One on 23 Dec at Dunbar Slough *Greene* (CW) and 6 on 27 Jan at Eastern

Iowa Airport *Linn* (JF).

**Red-winged Blackbird:** High counts were 45,000 on 1 Jan at Wa-ter Works P *Polk* (JG), 100,000 on 11 Feb near Iowa City *Johnson* (BWi), and 80,000 on 14 Feb near Iowa City *Johnson* (BWi).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** High count: 200 on 15 Dec at Quad Cities *Scott* (KJM).

**Rusty Blackbird:** There were a total of 23 reports of 74 individuals from 14 counties. High counts: 30 on 15 Dec at Granger *Dallas* (WO), four on 1 Jan at Water Works P *Polk* (JG), 5 on 9 Jan at Wolf Creek RA *Grundy* (MP), and 6 on 18 Feb at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DCH).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** Three re-ports this season: 4 on 1 Dec *Powesh-iek* (CPL), one on 25 Dec at Keller-ton *Ringgold* (Corbin Hemphill), and one on 15 Feb near Wall L *Crawford* (DSi).

**Common Grackle:** There were 67 reports after 24 last year with a high of 1000 on 1 Jan at Water Works P *Polk* (JG).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Four re-ports after nine last year: All: 12 on 23 Dec near Waubonsie Access *Fremont* (SM), 462 on 28 Dec west of Ottumwa *Wapello* (SJD), one on 1 Jan at Water Works P *Polk* (JG), and 4 on 28 Feb at Water Works P *Polk* (RJT).

**Northern Waterthrush:** One on 6 Jan at Turkey Creek Nature Pre-serve *Johnson* (\*LGR-ph).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** A report of one on 22 Dec–26 Jan at Three Mile L *Union* (SJD-ph).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** There were 30 reports this season after 15 last year with high counts of 8 on

12 Dec at Iowa City Water Works P  
*Johnson* (JPa), 18–36 on 18–21 Dec  
at Johnston gravel pits *Polk* (RLC),  
1–12 on 23 Dec at L Icaria RA *Ad-*  
*ams* (CJL), and 2–12 on 1–26 Jan at  
Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF, MHB-  
ph); all other reports were of 1–6  
individuals from the central and east-  
ern parts of the state with 3 reports

from *Adams* from the western part  
of the state. There was also a report  
of one Audubon's Yellow-rumped  
on 23 Dec at L Icaria *Adams* (\*CJL,  
good details).

**Indigo Bunting:** One juv male on  
1 Jan–20 Feb at Quad Cities *Scott*  
(\*BLB, CTB).

## CONTRIBUTORS

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# Iowa Christmas Bird Count, 2019–2020

*Chris Caster*

Reports were submitted for fifty-three counts this season (Figure 1), the same number as last season. Buchanan County returned. The Shenandoah count lost its compiler and was not run.

The state had experienced above average temperatures ahead of the count period; however, a cold front on the 13th brought unseasonable coldness as the count period began. The 14th was the coldest day of the month and a few counts had single-digit lows through the 18th. Soon after, though, Iowa was experiencing temperatures well above normal, and this lasted through the end of the count period (Glisan 2020). Buchanan County reported a high of 58 on the 25th. A couple of the January counts reported highs in the forties. Few counts experienced snow, but Spirit Lake, Canton, SD, Westfield, and ironically Keokuk all reported 3–5 inches.

The species count of 141 matched last year's although the total bird count (612,725) was reduced by nearly 70,000. Keokuk held the high with 92 species. Davenport recorded 87 and Saylorville 86. Other high counts: Burlington (81), Clinton (80), and Andalusia (80). DeSoto NWR (77) again led the Missouri River counts. NW Clayton County (62) and Mason City (49) led the northern counts. Lamoni (67) led the southern counts. The average count this season had 15 field observers, 6 field parties, and 56 species.

## REGULAR SPECIES

Five regular species were found in record numbers. Like last season, geese and swans were found in large numbers, while ducks were greatly reduced. It was a typical season for raptors, including owls, and gulls. Frugivores had a very good count. Sparrows, blackbirds, and finches were somewhat reduced. Frequently reported species are recorded in Table 2. Species found on three or fewer counts are recorded in Table 3.

Canada Geese (184,204) always seem to be plentiful. Cackling Geese (1,443) numbers vary, and this season were nearly half their average. Greater White-fronted Geese (4,452) were on sixteen counts with over 3,700 on the Andalusia count alone. Nearly all the Snow Geese (50,511) were at DeSoto NWR. Ross's Geese (12) were on four counts. Trumpeter Swans (3,077) were in unprecedented numbers and on thirty-eight counts. Tundra Swans (774) were primarily at Clinton and Green Island. Three Mute Swans were at Davenport.

Mallards (32,892) had their lowest count in ten. American Black Ducks (33) were scattered over fourteen counts. Gadwalls (150) were the most numerous of the dabblers, followed by Northern Pintail (58) and Green-winged Teal (57). American Wigeons (3) were nearly absent. Canvasbacks (2,056) can fluctuate greatly, and they were relatively scarce this season. Common Goldeneyes (6,126) fared better, but were still well below their average. The



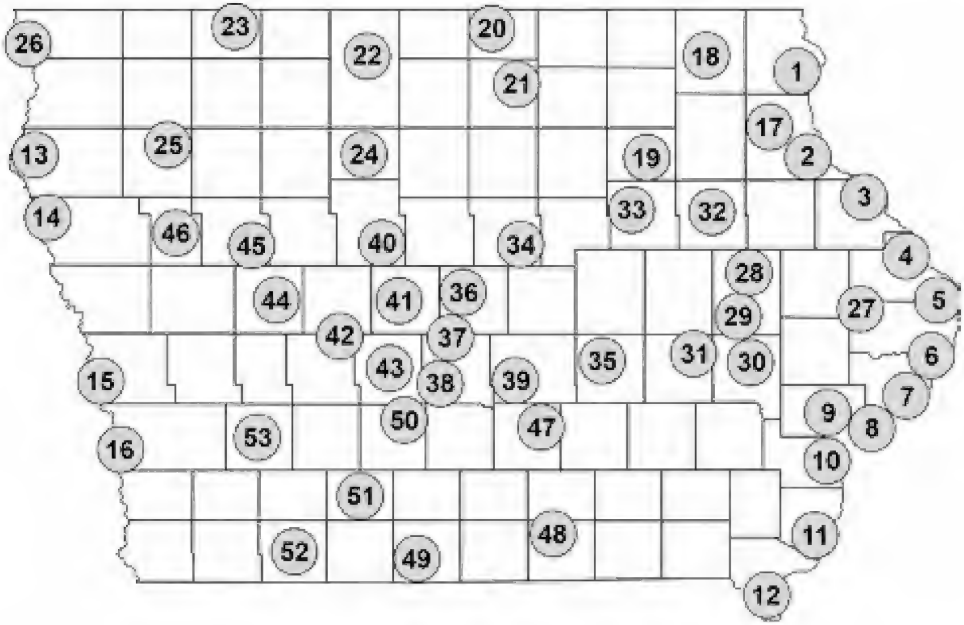


Figure 1. Map of Iowa CBC locations (see Table 1).

other divers were also all well below their averages. Greater Scaup (378) were primarily at Keokuk. Common Mergansers (40,885) were in unprecedented numbers with nearly 32,000 at Red Rock and nearly 5,000 at Saylorville. Red-breasted Mergansers (13) and Hooded Mergansers (62) were both half the usual. White-winged Scoters (3) and Long-tailed Ducks (4) were on three counts. Three Black Scoters were at Clinton.

Pied-billed Grebes (3) were at Burlington and Ames. Double-crested Cormorants (7) were on only three counts. American White Pelicans (365) were mostly at Red Rock and Keokuk. Great Blue Herons (62) were well off their average. Sandhill Cranes (6) had their lowest count in ten. Belted Kingfishers (108) were nearly average. American Coots (53), Killdeer (8), and Wilson's Snipes (3) were scarce. Ring-billed Gulls (28,662) and Herring Gulls (2,130) were found in good numbers. Iceland Gulls (7) and Glaucous Gulls (3) were each on three counts, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls (5) were on four.

Northern Bobwhites (33) were most plentiful at Union County and Lamoni. Wild Turkeys (1,952) were in fair numbers while Ring-necked Pheasants (1,298) had their best count in four. Gray Partridge (4) were only reported from Ames. Eurasian Collared-Doves (854) and Rock Pigeons (11,242) were close to their average, but Mourning Doves (2,969) had their poorest count in eight.

Bald Eagles (4,253) were in good numbers. Northern Harriers (133) and Cooper's Hawks (121) were average, but Sharp-shinned Hawks (48) were again nearly twenty below theirs. Red-shouldered Hawks (21) were over twenty birds for the fifth straight year. Rough-legged Hawks (188) and Red-tailed Hawks (1,747) were found in decent numbers. Golden Eagles (8) were on four counts. American Kestrels (641) were easily found. Merlins (30) again

had a big year. Saylorville had five and Des Moines had four. Peregrine Falcons (4) were in usual numbers.

Eastern Screech-Owls (116) seemed a bit harder to find this season. Great Horned Owls (247) and Barred Owls (252) were in good numbers. Long-eared Owls (34), Short-eared Owls (21) and Northern Saw-whet Owls (15) were all on average.

Red-headed Woodpeckers (739) bested last year's record by one. Red-bellied Woodpeckers (2,641) had another good count. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (35), Downy Woodpeckers (2,681), and Hairy Woodpeckers (729) were all nearly their averages. Northern Flickers (917) well-exceeded theirs. And Pileated Woodpeckers (152) also had a good count.

Northern Shrikes (63) had their best count in seven. Loggerhead Shrikes (3) were only reported from Taylor County. Blue Jays (6,494) and American Crows (52,567) were both abundant.

Black-capped Chickadees (4,902) had their second lowest count of the previous thirty years. The very same can be said for Tufted Titmouse (581) numbers. White-breasted Nuthatches (2,791) were close to a ten-year low. The irruption of Red-breasted Nuthatches (41) over the previous two counts seems to have ended. Brown Creepers (314) were in only fair numbers. Carolina Wrens (133) were reported in numbers not half of last year's. Winter Wren (32) numbers also dipped significantly below their average. Golden-crowned Kinglets (108) rebounded from a ten-year low to above average numbers. Ruby-crowned Kinglets (17) were in unprecedented numbers. Their previous high was ten birds in 2006–2007. These birds were scattered over eleven counts from DeSoto NWR and Boone County to Green Island and down to Keokuk.

Eastern Bluebirds (1,230) and Hermit Thrushes (57) had good counts. American Robins (11,591) jumped to twice their average. Brown Thrashers (3) were at Amana, Ames, and SE Webster County. Northern Mockingbirds (6) were about average. Green Island had four and Amana had two. Cedar Waxwings (6,438) had their second highest count in over thirty years. It was also a very good count for Yellow-rumped Warblers (235). European Starlings (43,739) had their lowest count in nearly twenty years, but Keokuk again reported over 7,000.

Thirteen Eastern Towhees was a new record. Nine Spotted Towhees was exceptional. It was the poorest count for American Tree Sparrows (8,679) in sixteen years. Field Sparrows (8) were twice their average. Fox Sparrows (34) were somewhat below their average. Song Sparrows (804) and Swamp Sparrows (226) were in good numbers. Three Lincoln's Sparrows were reported. Savannah Sparrows were at Iowa City and Ames. White-throated Sparrows (845) were in above-average numbers, while White-crowned Sparrows (77) were only half theirs. Harris's Sparrows (105) rebounded slightly from a 10-year low but were still only forty percent their average. And Dark-eyed Juncos (15,639) had their worst count in sixteen.

Horned Larks (1,429) doubled last year's count but were still only a third of their average. Lapland Longspurs (737) and Snow Buntings (145) were also

hard to find. Meadowlarks (127) average closer to six hundred. Red-winged Blackbirds (15,087) were about half their average. Brown-headed Cowbirds (2,017) were nearly twice theirs. Rusty Blackbirds (101) were found on twelve counts. Common Grackles (3,982) were reported in good numbers.

House Sparrows (22,191) were below average, but Eurasian Tree Sparrows (2,236) were found in good numbers. They were reported north to NW Clayton County and westward to Boone County. House Finches (2,792) were also in good numbers. Purple Finches (175) were but a third their average. Common Redpolls (14) were on just two counts. Pine Siskins (280) were only half their average. Nearly a third of those were in Davenport. American Goldfinch (2,422) counts continued their steady decline. Northern Cardinal (6,615) numbers held constant as ever.

#### NOTABLE MISSES

There were very few notable misses this season. Only Black-billed Magpie was also missed last year. Misses included Common Loon, Gray Catbird (7 of last 10), Surf Scoter, Prairie Falcon, Black-billed Magpie (6 of last 10), Snowy Owl, Chipping Sparrow, and LeConte's Sparrow (5 of last 10). Unfortunately, Ruffed Grouse was also missed.

#### UNCOMMON SPECIES

New to the Iowa CBC this year was a Pacific Loon at Red Rock. Two Blue-winged Teal were at Princeton. A Horned Grebe was at Burlington. A wayward Turkey Vulture was at Canton, SD. Northern Goshawks were at Yellow River Forest, Spirit Lake, and Canton. Eastern Phoebe were at Clinton and Davenport. Two Mountain Bluebirds were at Dubuque. This is the third count of the last eight that these birds have been reported. The previous reports had been on the nearby Green Island count. Townsend's Solitaires were at Mason City and Amana. Flocks of Red Crossbills were found at Sioux City, Omaha, and Amana. Two White-winged Crossbills were at Cedar Rapids. A Vesper Sparrow was at DeSoto NWR. Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds were at Iowa City. A Brewer's Blackbird was at Davenport. Two Orange-crowned Warblers were at Union County and another count-week bird was at Ames. Lastly, DeSoto NWR reported a Common Yellowthroat. Both of those warblers had been reported on last season's count as well.

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Table 1. Site Data for 2019–2020 Christmas Bird Count

Location	Date	Total Species	Total Birds	Obs	Field Pts	Hr	Miles Car
MISSISSIPPI RIVER							
1. Yellow River Forest	19-Dec	58	3,513	8	6	39	307
2. SE Clayton County	5-Jan	66	4,068	8	4	30	314
3. Dubuque	14-Dec	46	4,940	16	7	40	172
4. Green Island	20-Dec	71	5,839	25	6	49	362
5. Clinton	19-Dec	80	7,970	16	6	46.25	320
6. Princeton	18-Dec	71	9,195	13	5	42.75	380
7. Davenport	15-Dec	87	31,731	24	8	69	499
8. Andalusia	24-Dec	80	17,743	13	4	35.5	289
9. Muscatine	26-Dec	68	7,289	14	5	38	12
10. W Mercer County	23-Dec	77	11,767	12	5	41.25	287
11. Burlington	14-Dec	81	8,868	17	8	61	280
12. Keokuk	16-Dec	92	48,361	8	5	43.5	387
MISSOURI RIVER							
13. Westfield	17-Dec	45	3,257	25	9	42	326
14. Sioux City	14-Dec	59	7,161	24	10	52.2	683
15. DeSoto NWR	15-Dec	77	77,479	33	18	116.75	258
16. Omaha	1-Jan	69	8,813	21	10	56	228
NORTHERN THIRD							
17. NW Clayton County	3-Jan	62	4,925	7	4	32.75	409
18. Decorah	22-Dec	41	4,818	27	7	44	254
19. Bremer County	14-Dec	46	8,392	13	8	38	425
20. Worth County	1-Jan	39	3,655	8	3	24	248.9
21. Mason City	21-Dec	49	14,075	17	8	61	373
22. Union Slough NWR	2-Jan	37	2,636	18	8	40	482.9
23. Spirit Lake	14-Dec	39	1,939	4	2	14.5	208
24. Humboldt County	20-Dec	35	2,870	5	3	28	291
25. Cherokee	27-Dec	34	1,659	8	3	7	361
26. Canton	28-Dec	45	1,951	9	3	24.25	305
MIDDLE THIRD							
27. Lost Nation	19-Dec	59	5,222	15	6	30.5	326
28. North Linn	21-Dec	47	3,178	8	4	23	243
29. Cedar Rapids	14-Dec	53	8,945	22	10	57.5	414.9
30. Iowa City	15-Dec	64	14,867	37	11	66.3	582
31. Amana	29-Dec	49	1,578	10	4	27	75
32. Buchanan County	25-Dec	57	4,064	8	5	29.75	308
33. Cedar Falls-Waterloo	21-Dec	47	20,874	20	10	59	648
34. Eldora-Union	18-Dec	38	3,782	11	4	26	164
35. Grinnell	21-Dec	31	3,326	6	3	18	42
36. Ames	14-Dec	76	23,179	30	15	103.5	386
37. Saylorville Reservoir	15-Dec	86	18,674	22	12	73	547
38. Des Moines	21-Dec	68	33,044	18	11	55.5	344
39. Neal Smith NWR	4-Jan	55	4,960	52	10	31.25	267.6
40. SE Webster County	21-Dec	39	8,537	11	5	na	262
41. Boone County	28-Dec	56	3,895	25	9	54	467.5
42. Jamaica	20-Dec	55	13,682	12	6	23	244
43. Dallas County	21-Dec	47	5,524	23	8	27	271
44. Carroll County	19-Dec	39	1,530	6	2	15.7	190.8
45. Sac County	4-Jan	36	3,499	5	4	18	156
46. Ida County	4-Jan	37	5,025	14	7	26.5	228
SOUTHERN THIRD							
47. Red Rock Reservoir	14-Dec	66	56,054	15	7	42.4	306.2
48. Rathbun Reservoir	14-Dec	59	8,891	17	6	38.5	429
49. Lamoni	29-Dec	67	10,817	5	4	39	389
50. NE Madison County	19-Dec	51	6,642	13	13	45	211.15
51. Union County	22-Dec	66	32,524	2	2	12.5	123
52. Taylor County	21-Dec	41	2,447	3	1	8	70
53. Cass County	29-Dec	34	3,051	8	2	11	154
TOTAL			612,725				

\*includes 4 miles by boat

\*includes 1.75 miles by kayak



Miles Ft	Owling Hr	Owling Mi	Feeder Pt	Feeder Hr	Temp L	Temp H	Snow Depth	Wind
9	3	15	0	0	19	38	0	S 6-10
3	2.75	6	0	0	28	41	1	SW 10-25
19	4	6	2	na	24	28	0	NW 5-15
26.75	3	18	1	0	23	45	0	S 6-13
5.25	3.25	26	2	2	16	39	0	SW 0-10
13*	5	48	1	1	12	22	0	W 5-10
17	14	94	4	7.5	10	21	0	NE 0-10
13	7.25	58	0	0	27	54	0	S 0-10
283	4.25	27	5	8	34	51	0	W 0-10
6.75*	7.75	49	0	0	29	53	0	S 0-5
49	2	2	1	6	27	34	0	NW 12-18
23.5	3	12	0	0	18	28	4	N 0-14
10.5	1.5	5	2	2	16	33	3	N 3-8
18.5	3	4	3	8	14	23	1	NW 0-12
31.8	0	0	1	3	16	21	1.5	E 3-6
28	1	6	3	4	23	46	0	S 7-9
4	3.75	21	0	0	30	36	0	SW 0-5
10	2	22	5	4	34	48	0	S 3-14
3	2	0	8	10	22	34	0	N 10-15
13	0	0	0	0	18	35	3	SW 5-15
26	0	0	3	4	17	47	1	SSW 5-10
6	2	37	0	0	32	35	2	NNE 8-14
0.5	0	0	6	10.5	7	15	4.5	NW 10-25
3	1.75	19	1	1.5	23	44	0.5	S 0-16
0	0	0	0	0	17	41	0.25	calm
5.5	3	0.5	1	1	11	37	4	S 0-13
4.5	0	0	0	0	21	22	0	N 10-12
1.5	2	20	0	0	18	40	0	na
20	3	19	4	12.5	23	24	0	NW 7-8
29.9	3.3	36	12	28.5	5	19	0	NW 3-8
5	4	15	1	5	30	40	0	SW 15-20
9.25	1.75	11	4	2.5	37	58	0	S 0-10
14	2	5	2	6	24	38	0	N 10-15
5.5	0.5	9	1	8	7	25	0	S 8
12	4	8	2	8	25	42	0	W 0-5
37.5	4	16	6	15	18	26	0	NW 9-21
30	7	55	0	0	7	20	0	NW 0-7
34	2	35	3	12	23	52	0	SW 5-15
6.75	2.75	69.3	1	1	31	37	0	var. 2-24
1	0	0	2	4	28	50	0.5	N 0-3
32.15	4	2	5	16.5	27	44	0	W 3-10
4.5	0.5	0.5	1	2	35	37	0	S 8-15
10	1	0	1	4	37	52	0	SW 5-10
7.1	2	35.1	0	0	27	55	trace	SWS 5-10
10	0	0	1	2	21	30	0.5	W 5-10
26	0	0	0	0	15	30	0	calm
19.3	0.5	7.6	0	0	21	26	0	NE 11-18
5.25	3.75	39	4	15	28	32	0	NW 5-15
8.5	0	0	0	0	34	42	0	SW 20-21
16.25	0	0	0	0	31	45	0	SW 5-10
4	1.5	17	0	0	30	52	0	SW 5-15
0	0.5	4	0	0	21	47	0	SW 4-12
4.25	0	0	0	0	32	37	0	SW 13-25

Table 2a. Christmas Bird Count Data, 2019–2020

Location	Sn Go	Ro Go	Gr W-f Go	Cack Go	Ca Go	Tr Sw	Tu Sw	Wo Du	No Sh	Ga	Ma	Am Bl Du	No Pi	Gr Wi Te	Ca
MISSISSIPPI RIVER															
1. Yellow River Forest					191	9					123				5
2. SE Clayton County				1	1409	11					40				4
3. Dubuque				2	2324	40					290				
4. Green Island				3	689	90	51			4	20	1			1
5. Clinton			8		1681	58	715	1	2	4	910	4	3		289
6. Princeton			8		2717	239				2	125				
7. Davenport	1		32	7	7193	2		1		5	768	1		1	202
8. Andalusia	14		3703	2	2044	2		4		1	113	3			22
9. Muscatine	1				1730						120				
10. W Mercer County	25		39	4	1311	21		1	12	20	5314	1	5	1	
11. Burlington			70	302	2390	47			2	14	516			2	15
12. Keokuk	1	1	400	7	4513	87		1	15	81	660	3			1523
Subtotals	42	1	4260	328	28192	606	766	8	31	131	8999	19	8	4	2061
MISSOURI RIVER															
13. Westfield	3			11	1410						30				
14. Sioux City	10	3	25	46	2488						415		1	1	
15. DeSoto NWR	50000	6	12	5	8275	144				2	12218			3	
16. Omaha	437			6	2375	13			20		132			24	
Subtotals	50450	9	37	68	14548	157	0	0	20	2	12795	0	1	28	0
NORTHERN THIRD															
17. NW Clayton County				2	328						2				
18. Decorah					1801						6				
19. Bremer County					4608	5				1	511		1		
20. Worth County				7	2101	76	2				2				
21. Mason City				4	8083	118	1				416	2			
22. Union Slough NWR						133			3		73				
23. Spirit Lake				2	405						425				5
24. Humboldt County					1189						51	1			
25. Cherokee					211										
26. Canton					200										
Subtotals	0	0	0	15	18926	332	3	0	3	1	1486	3	1	0	5
MIDDLE THIRD															
27. Lost Nation					287	1					1				
28. North Linn					467	2									
29. Cedar Rapids	1		1	10	3457	50					538				
30. Iowa City	1			2	4756	9					245	1			
31. Amana			1		500	250	2			5	16		18		
32. Buchanan County				2	1049						50				
33. Cedar Falls-Waterloo			1	11	8202	149					964	2			
34. Eldora-Union					2508	18									
35. Grinnell					1850	51					172				
36. Ames	1		6	148	9345	106 cw				1	491 cw			cw	
37. Saylorville Reservoir				73	5285	209				2	1200	3	1		
38. Des Moines		2	12	140	15474	267	3	1			1590	1			
39. Neal Smith NWR				4	1280	58					246			28	
40. SE Webster County				20	5887	311					1297				
41. Boone County					196	4					43				
42. Jamaica			74	29	11046	182					1000				
43. Dallas County				2	2315	52									
44. Carroll County				cw	140	2					2				
45. Sac County					2740	21									
46. Ida County					3681	9		1			45		cw		
Subtotals	3	2	95	441	80465	1751	5	2	0	8	7900	7	47	0	0
SOUTHERN THIRD															
47. Red Rock Reservoir				26	3191	8					217	4			
48. Rathbun Reservoir	4			10	3875					6	456				
49. Lamoni				8	2747						21				
50. NE Madison County	1			6	4009					2	104				
51. Union County	11		60	541	24320				3		896		1	2	
52. Taylor County					1746						18				
53. Cass County					2185	223									
Subtotals	16	0	60	591	42073	231	0	0	3	8	1712	4	1	2	0
Totals	50511	12	4452	1443	184204	3077	774	10	57	150	32892	33	58	34	2066

Re	Ri Ne Du	Gr Sc	Le Sc	Bu	Co Go	Ho Me	Co Me	Re Br Me	Ru Du	No Bo	Ri Ne Ph	Wi Tu	Ro Pi	Eu Co Do	Mo Do	Am Co	Ki	Ri Bi Gu
	2		3 2 1 20	1 2 5	30 20 162		13 120 30 531	2 2 1	2 4 12		3 1	51 20 14 151 25	190 203 182		36 18 47 111			5 97
20			25 58	15 10	202 280	1	145 277		23 1			1 3	357 340		65 23		2	233 23
	6 3		6 4	2 4	643 982	1	855 383		4 4			33 1	927 186		228 210	1	3	1831 3659
			1	1	205 382		114 76			1	8 1	52 6		83 97			1	181 20
19	67	371	131	150	2134	8	440	3	273	2	13	13 21	330 297	3	53 370	10		462 6724
39	84	371	251	188	5098	11	2984	8	327	3	45	206	3312	59	1339	12	7	13235
					4 29 30		5 111 44		6 14 24		47 13 7	143 158 431 67	39 520 56 278	31 69 6 16	80 10 51 160		18	
0	30	0	22	2	297	29	160	0	44	0	67	799	893	122	301	18	0	0
										3	46 20 10 10 9	41 99 23 69 233	303 247 324 382 312	5 9 1	34 16 19 9 12		1	
			2		4		5				186 79 43 12 25	144 91 53 23 316 308	6 3 4 5 45					
4	7	4	1	2	131 1			9				79 43 12 25	91 53 23 316 308	3 4 5 8 1	5 20			
4	7	4	3	2	136	0	5	0	9	3	440	598	2412	82	104	20	1	0
											40 19 1 4 3 4 46 9 2 56 13	20 28 20 41 44 21 7	116 60 931 188 22 130 664 47 18 244 415 674	7 6 3 1 1 8 12 3 3 181 149	13 4 2 108 180 10 13 45 33 149		1 1 2 1 1 7 359 168	
					9 9	1	1		1			4 20 4 41 44 21 7	20 188 22 130 664 47 18 244 415 674	3 1 1 8 12 3 3 181 149	166 187 2 108 180 10 13 45 33 149			
1	2 3 2		2 8 5	1	2 18 304 65		4 4751 23		2 18 16		56 13	7 13	244 415 674	122 181	45 33	1 1		7 359 168
			1			7		1			19 6 19 17 4 60 398	15 96 40 35	44 3 247 16 66 134 73 16	22 3 33 6 2 5 3 10	87 6 2 30 3 5 8			
		1			6		14			4	17	35	16	6	30			
											12 4 60 398		66 134 73 16		3 5 8			
1	8	1	16	1	429	8	4793	2	38	4	732	291	4201	484	1061	3	0	536
		2	1		88 28	5 9	31945 998	3			1 8	18 7	69 107	3 3	4 43			14760 125
			1						6	12	1	5	129	20	42			5
1	2		2		49 1				5	11	1 3	4 16 20 7	6 16 5 68	2 6 5 4			1	
1	2	2	4	7	166	14	32943	3	11	23	14	58	424	107	164	0	0	14891
45	131	378	296	200	6126	62	40885	13	429	33	1298	1952	11242	854	2969	53	8	28662

Table 2b. Christmas Bird Count Data, 2019–2020

Location	He Gu	Le B-b Gu	Am Wh Pe	Gr Bl He	Go Ea	No Ha	Sh Ha	Co Ha	ac sp	Ba Ea	Re Sh Ha	Re Ta Ha	Ro Le Ha	Ba Ow	Ea Sc Ow
MISSISSIPPI RIVER															
1. Yellow River Forest					3	1	3	4		122		42	21	4	4
2. SE Clayton County					2	2	1			76	1	30	5	3	6
3. Dubuque	1		1							52		24	1	1	2
4. Green Island				1	2	3	2			105		50	8	10	11
5. Clinton	69			19				2		96	2	42	3	6	10
6. Princeton	23		1	7				3		132		21	1	3	1
7. Davenport	350	1	1	7				3	4	282		66	1	25	1
8. Andalusia	29			4			1	1		126	3	44	1	36	9
9. Muscatine	44			2		3	2	2		52		35		12	6
10. W Mercer County	22			3		2	1	2		60		23	3	8	4
11. Burlington	3		8	3		1	2	2		135		39	4	3	1
12. Keokuk	77	2	79	3		10	2	3		603		45	2	2	7
Subtotals	618	3	90	49	7	22	18	23	0	1841	6	461	50	113	62
MISSOURI RIVER															
13. Westfield						3		3		22		24	12	2	4
14. Sioux City						4	1	1		20		56	2	4	2
15. DeSoto NWR				2		6	1	5	1	65		44	3	6	1
16. Omaha	3			1		3	3	2		41		63	1	2	
Subtotals	3	0	0	3	0	16	5	11	1	148	0	187	18	14	7
NORTHERN THIRD															
17. NW Clayton County				1		2	2	2		133		46	4	7	6
18. Decorah						2		1		113		39	9	4	
19. Bremer County				1				3		72	1	18	2	4	
20. Worth County						2				8		23		2	
21. Mason City						4	1	2		31		21	7	1	1
22. Union Slough NWR								2		108		8	1	3	
23. Spirit Lake								1		11		10	2		
24. Humboldt County						1		1		11		9	2	1	
25. Cherokee								3		43		25	8		
26. Canton						2		1		23		27	21	2	1
Subtotals	0	0	0	2	0	13	3	16	0	553	1	226	56	24	8
MIDDLE THIRD															
27. Lost Nation						13	2	2		59		34	1	8	6
28. North Linn							2	6		47		28	5	4	1
29. Cedar Rapids						1	1	2		53		20		3	
30. Iowa City						2		6		163		78	3	6	
31. Amana						1			2	55		21	1	1	1
32. Buchanan County				1						49	1	24	4	10	3
33. Cedar Falls-Waterloo						3		2		80	8	42	8	4	
34. Eldora-Union						1				43		16	2		
35. Grinnell										2		4			
36. Ames						5	2	9		32	1	59	2	12	1
37. Saylorville Reservoir	38	1	2			3	2	7	1	155		80	1	15	10
38. Des Moines	38		5				1	7		191		50	1	3	
39. Neal Smith NWR						3	1	2	1	64		35		2	1
40. SE Webster County										24		9			
41. Boone County							2	2		8		21	1	6	8
42. Jamaica	1						1	1		36		35	1	2	3
43. Dallas County						1	2	1		27	1	43	2	8	
44. Carroll County								1		8	cw	17	1	2	2
45. Sac County						1				30		11	1	2	
46. Ida County								1		19		14		cw	
Subtotals	77	1	7	1	0	34	16	49	4	1145	11	641	34	88	36
SOUTHERN THIRD															
47. Red Rock Reservoir	1428	1	268	1		4		2		236		35	1	2	1
48. Rathbun Reservoir	3			6	1	8	1	2		132		31	3	3	
49. Lamoni	1					32	2	2		137	3	72	21	3	
50. NE Madison County						1	2	2		15		44			
51. Union County						1	1	1		13		16	1	1	2
52. Taylor County						1		1		11		19	4	1	
53. Cass County						1				22		15		3	
Subtotals	1432	1	268	7	1	48	6	10	0	566	3	232	30	13	3
Totals	2130	5	365	62	8	133	48	109	5	4253	21	1747	188	252	116



Gr Ho Ow	Lo Ea Ow	Sh Ea Ow	No S-w Ow	Be Ki	Re He Wo	Re Be Wo	Ye Be Sa	Do Wo	Ha Wo	No Fl	Pi Wo	Am Ke	Me	No Sh	Bl Ja	Am Cr
9			2	2	17	48		36	16	5	14	15	1	1	131	343
3	3			8		47		47	10	2	5	22		1	59	125
cw				1		43		43	7	2	2	9			48	245
6	1			8	24	77	4	55	26	47	11	32		5	226	221
5			1	3	36	52	5	63	17	15	5	15			161	225
7				2	30	37	2	44	16	12	2	26			145	23
14				5	15	127	1	161	40	21	8	14			180	114
21	4		2	9	23	94	3	84	30	30	16	25	1		181	113
9		1	1	6	9	62		68	21	15	4	21	1		151	105
14	1		1	9	29	52		40	13	21	7	25	1		113	63
1				2	15	53	2	45	9	49	2	29	3		253	251
3		1		5	4	96	5	80	17	44	4	23	1		175	17497
92	9	2	7	60	202	788	22	766	222	263	80	256	8	7	1823	19325
1						22		20	5	8		3	2	3	69	128
4				2		42		43	12	23		3	3	2	63	73
7				1	35	97	1	79	11	63		12		1	163	35
3				3	133	81		62	15	71	2	11		1	106	62
15	0	0	0	6	168	242	1	204	43	165	7	29	5	7	401	298
11		2		4	5	53	1	72	22	3	5	21	1	3	177	181
		1		3	1	58		51	18		6	12		6	131	530
					11	39		52	7	4	1	6	1	4	108	616
6						10		19	6	1	1	1		1	60	96
10			1			27		65	19	1	1	7			45	3292
4		2				9		10	2	1		1			69	205
1						11		39	4						32	34
2	cw				2	13		13	2			1	1	cw	24	34
1				1		7		6	3	1		3			96	155
17			2			9		10	4	6	1	5		4	53	164
52	0	5	3	8	19	236	1	337	87	17	15	57	3	18	795	5307
10		2		2	54	46		35	16	13	1	24		1	198	193
4			1		3	38		46	13	2		20		3	132	68
				1	15	82		144	22	6	1	14			84	293
1				1	16	107	1	136	32	30	4	27		5	222	280
1				1	15	10		18	3	4	3	5			25	40
5	1		2	3	4	46		43	20	3	1	18		1	119	109
3						69		68	35	1	8	12		3	122	7841
1				1	4	45		34	4		5	4		1	83	105
4					2	9		12	2	1		3			25	495
8	1			3		185		181	54	12		10	2	3	161	7100
17	12	3	1	2	5	130	1	131	30	61	3	10	1	5	327	147
3				5	4	82		97	30	38	1	6	5		201	8500
3		3			2	57		51	7	20		6	4	1	153	77
					4	20		9	5	1	1	4		1	32	47
11		3		6	27	89		105	41	13	4	3			224	95
2				4	22	25	1	30	9	19		3			87	79
1				1	29	46		39	9	26	5	8		1	175	104
1	1			1		29		13	3	2		3	2	1	48	35
1					1	13		8	4			5			26	41
1	6	cw	1			5		6	1	1		2			86	58
77	21	11	5	31	207	1133	3	1206	340	253	37	187	14	26	2530	25707
1				1	21	63	2	59	13	47	2	15			198	150
3				1	11	31		34	3	18	2	24			136	210
1	1				88	55	2	20	9	78	3	34		3	337	1196
1				1	4	56	1	37	6	38	6	19		1	128	153
2	3				6	10		6	3	20		8		1	81	135
1		3			11	5	3	4	2	16		5			29	70
2					2	22		8	1	2		7			36	16
11	4	3	0	3	143	242	8	168	37	219	13	112	0	5	945	1930
247	34	21	15	108	739	2641	35	2681	729	917	152	641	30	63	6494	52567

Table 2c. Christmas Bird Count Data, 2019–2020

Location	Ho La	Bl Ch	Tu Ti	Re Br Nu	Wh Br Nu	Br Cr	Wi Wr	Ca Wr	Go Cr Ki	Ru Cr Ki	Ea Bl	He Th	Am Ro
MISSISSIPPI RIVER													
1. Yellow River Forest	112	76	9	1	69	1		1	1		8		5
2. SE Clayton County	18	111	20		66	2	3	1	2		6		2
3. Dubuque		109	3		49	1		3			6		
4. Green Island	3	94	21		50	19	5	1	13		137	7	38
5. Clinton	15	173	21		67	30	2	8	7	2	5	4	15
6. Princeton	7	147	21	3	45	21	1	4	5		5		6
7. Davenport	3	317	34	2	174	25		22	1	1	26	11	26
8. Andalusia	23	172	61		108	14	3	6	9		29	5	30
9. Muscatine	5	120	28	1	68	12	2	3	6	2	15	2	21
10. W Mercer County	37	75	24	2	40	7		6	6	1	20	15	28
11. Burlington	25	144	38	1	45	2	2	3			79		50
12. Keokuk	648	118	57	1	47	17	1	19	13	3	51	4	56
Subtotals	896	1656	337	11	828	151	19	77	63	11	387	48	277
MISSOURI RIVER													
13. Westfield	18	19			21	1		1					
14. Sioux City	10	101		ow	63	2	1	1			17		395
15. DeSoto NWR	42	57	2		74	3	1	1	8	2	35		1505
16. Omaha		60	3	1	90	8		9	4	1	40		2070
Subtotals	70	237	5	1	248	14	2	12	12	3	92	0	3970
NORTHERN THIRD													
17. NW Clayton County	25	127	2	1	80	2	1	3	3		8		
18. Decorah	6	153	13		68	2	1						2
19. Bremer County	53	111			39		2						4
20. Worth County		24			19	1							
21. Mason City	1	166	1		82	1					10	1	
22. Union Slough NWR	32	27			5	1							
23. Spirit Lake	2	56			17	2							
24. Humboldt County	50	47			19	1							
25. Cherokee	2	17			15						2		3
26. Canton		49			10	4			5				1
Subtotals	171	777	16	1	354	14	4	3	8	0	20	1	10
MIDDLE THIRD													
27. Lost Nation	7	34	3		10	9			1		3		1
28. North Linn	4	52	5		55	6			1		3		
29. Cedar Rapids		224	29	5	80	9	1	2			7		30
30. Iowa City		193	50	1	93	3		2	1		19		16
31. Amana		2			8	1					10		
32. Buchanan County	23	112	1	3	57	4	2	1	2		2	1	4
33. Cedar Falls-Waterloo	1	193			75	3		7					1
34. Eldora-Union		30			30	2							
35. Grinnell		12			19								
36. Ames	54	274	2	1	182	22	2	1	2		14	2	18
37. Saylorville Reservoir	12	182	5	5	118	15		1	6		60	2	46
38. Des Moines		233	10	2	95	6	1	9	2	1	99		151
39. Neal Smith NWR	6	27	1	ow	40	7		1			27		71
40. SE Webster County		24			11	1		3					12
41. Boone County	19	190	33	4	109	8		2	2	1	9		7
42. Jamaica		39	1		49	3		1			36		78
43. Dallas County		71	14	5	57	4			2		48		89
44. Carroll County	25	8			20	2							3
45. Sac County	96	12			14	1							1
46. Ida County	25	3			9						2		12
Subtotals	272	1915	154	26	1131	106	6	30	19	2	339	5	540
SOUTHERN THIRD													
47. Red Rock Reservoir		111	14		77	5	1	5			69	1	16
48. Rathbun Reservoir		41	11		32						74		401
49. Lamoni	17	87	36	1	28	18		1	3		147	2	1512
50. NE Madison County		50	2		43	1		1			46		82
51. Union County	3	21		1	8			3	3	1	30		4585
52. Taylor County		3	5		12			1			22		186
53. Cass County		4	1		30	5					4		12
Subtotals	20	317	69	2	230	29	1	11	6	1	392	3	6794
Totals	1429	4902	581	41	2791	314	32	133	108	17	1230	57	11591

	Eu St	Ce Wa	Ho Sp	Eu Tr Sp	Ho Fi	Pu Fi	Pi Si	Am Go	La Lo	Sn Bu	Fi Sp	Fo Sp	Am Tr Sp	Da Ey Ju	Wh Cr Sp	Ha Sp	Wh Th Sp
	539	6	661		34	6		41					105	267			1
	385		469	3	31	1	1	34		19			148	309			3
	353		409		39			48				1	47	264	2		1
	934	647	288	10	34	17	1	44	2				107	275			6
	360	35	388	65	108	1	2	66	59	1	1	1	220	415			41
	1744	59	795	121	162	2	2	62			4		342	611	5		13
	2330	59	1828	175	194	2	87	145		1		2	139	649	5		41
	2153	45	1109	378	217	7	1	81					140	425	9		47
	1801	113	792	233	49	9		49	22	5			147	396	7		13
	741	58	470	469	4			19	6	1		2	231	266	1		28
	1424	203	256	99	46	21	61	37			1	2	135	379	5		21
	7266	174	354	362	53	3	1	91	224	2		2	359	612	3		155
	20030	1399	7819	1915	971	69	156	717	313	29	6	10	2120	4868	37	0	370
	431	15	91		9	10		9	1				194	275			
	1029	315	202		60	9	20	93					75	349	1	6	
	1400	340	113		40	1		87				1	545	607	4	29	14
	919	40	135		84	2	10	119					131	175	5	44	47
	3779	710	541	0	193	22	30	308	1	0	0	1	945	1406	10	79	61
	974	43	716	6	36	5		9				1	638	437			5
	192	26	313		29			59					64	252			
	401	23	589		77	4		15					220	287			11
	145	10	450		4			14					20	14			
	341		315		63 cw		4	23		40			45	143			2
	702		388		1				12	69			310	58	4	1	
	141		230		26			33					10	24			
	901	2	261		19			11					61	32		cw	
	291	30	256		20			1					18	62		5	
	370	20	219		8		4	3	120	3			11	42			
	4458	154	3737	6	283	9	8	168	132	112	0	1	1397	1351	4	6	18
	692	88	1155	97	1	1		71	6	2	2		677	648			40
	512	40	957	25	28		1	3	15				95	217			36
	563	12	684	35	52			29					53	294			20
	685	488	902	62	142	17	8	125					390	536	2		20
	150	11	100	45	6			23					20	120			1
	649	17	750	15	62			18	1				51	298			9
	820	66	432		77		1	23					128	244			
	303		117	31	12		4	10					58	141			
	475	45	19		20			21					14	15		1	
	1351	194	883	1	245	7	46	94	58			1	167	639		4	26
	490	390	498		50	4	2	161	130			1	810	1197	1	1	55
	1969	8	239		39			135					91	404			38
	320	135	798	3	97			17					317	408			3
	415		77		20		16	3					67	45			
	517	64	565	1	36	4	1	108					162	511	2		18
	245	27	43		19	1		21					45	122			6
	1346	133	164		80	2	6	17					53	199			9
	363	32	420					2					34	127			
	144		3		3			10					4	61		2	
	118	4	214		51		cw						13	114		2	
	12127	1754	9020	315	1040	36	85	891	210	2	2	2	3249	6340	5	10	281
	714	585	357		33			91		2			316	505		2	36
	445	777	252		14	3		33					112	207	2		17
	1022	747	170		118	31		136	81			3	310	423	2	1	8
	647	176	233		39	3		33					121	189	16	3	14
	250	100	29		88	2	1	36				17	54	202		2	39
	78	2	12					4					50	74		2	1
	189	34	21		13			5					5	74	1		
	3345	2421	1074	0	305	39	1	338	81	2	0	20	968	1674	21	10	115
	43739	6438	22191	2236	2792	175	280	2422	737	145	8	34	8679	15639	77	105	845

Table 2d. Christmas Bird Count Data, 2019–2020

Location	So Sp	Sw Sp	Sp To	Ea To	me sp	Re Wi Bl	Br He Co	Ru Bl	Co Gr	bl sp	Ye Ru Wa	No Ca
MISSISSIPPI RIVER												
1. Yellow River Forest	2	2									3	64
2. SE Clayton County	3	1				11	10				1	88
3. Dubuque	2						1					93
4. Green Island	19	9				13	15				50	130
5. Clinton	10	15		1							17	194
6. Princeton	17	3				81	2	20			7	162
7. Davenport	70	38		1		5974	1098	17	3713			319
8. Andalusia	59	30				11	42		9		1	233
9. Muscatine	25	2		1		13	8				2	188
10. W Mercer County	41	5		1		955	11		117		2	151
11. Burlington	19	3				305	2		15		1	224
12. Keokuk	86	17		2		30		1			10	420
Subtotals	353	125	0	6	0	7393	1189	38	3854	0	94	2266
MISSOURI RIVER												
13. Westfield									1			10
14. Sioux City			1			4			3			226
15. DeSoto NWR	10	3	4		28	127			11			150
16. Omaha	16	1	3		16	61				158		109
Subtotals	26	4	8	0	44	192	0	0	15	158	0	495
NORTHERN THIRD												
17. NW Clayton County	17	8				34			1		2	211
18. Decorah	4	1								400		59
19. Bremer County	3	1										86
20. Worth County						39		1				10
21. Mason City	1 cw								3			105
22. Union Slough NWR	1					4			46			5
23. Spirit Lake												5
24. Humboldt County									2			35
25. Cherokee												8
26. Canton						120	3	1				6
Subtotals	26	10	0	0	0	197	3	2	52	400	2	530
MIDDLE THIRD												
27. Lost Nation	35	7		4		1	35		22		3	362
28. North Linn	4					1					3	133
29. Cedar Rapids	2				21		551		1			301
30. Iowa City	21	1				4181	27				8	324
31. Amana	4											35
32. Buchanan County	12	3		1		2	1					104
33. Cedar Falls-Waterloo	8	28				35						143
34. Eldora-Union	2					6	30					31
35. Grinnell											1	14
36. Ames	27	1				5	78	2				324
37. Saylorville Reservoir	72	29				217	20	30	16		7	312
38. Des Moines	31		1			1100					37	273
39. Neal Smith NWR	3	1		1		22	13	1	2	1		144
40. SE Webster County	1						40	3	1			13
41. Boone County	59	13		1		64					26	105
42. Jamaica	2	1				86	2		7			27
43. Dallas County	1					187						58
44. Carroll County	5	1										29
45. Sac County	66					12		6				11
46. Ida County						7	5					10
Subtotals	355	85	1	7	21	5926	802	42	49	1	85	2753
SOUTHERN THIRD												
47. Red Rock Reservoir	12								1	5	12	181
48. Rathbun Reservoir	3				1	18		4	8		1	85
49. Lamoni	13	1			14	588	23	15	2		18	142
50. NE Madison County	13					75					2	48
51. Union County	2	1				698			1		21	81
52. Taylor County	1				1							11
53. Cass County												23
Subtotals	44	2	0	0	16	1379	23	19	12	5	54	571
Totals	804	226	9	13	81	15087	2017	101	3982	564	235	6615



Table 3. Species reported on three or fewer Christmas Bird Counts, 2019–2020

Species	Counts
Mute Swan	Davenport (3)
Blue-winged Teal	Princeton (2)
American Wigeon	Omaha (1), Des Moines (1), NE Madison County (1)
White-winged Scoter	Andalusia (1), Keokuk (1), Saylorville (1)
Black Scoter	Clinton (3)
Long-tailed Duck	Keokuk (2), Omaha (1), Saylorville (1)
duck sp.	Omaha (6), Neal Smith NWR (12)
Gray Partridge	Ames (4)
Pied-billed Grebe	Burlington (2), Ames (1)
Horned Grebe	Burlington (1)
Sandhill Crane	Princeton (3), Saylorville (3)
Wilson's Snipe	Clinton (1), Burlington (1), Des Moines (1)
Iceland Gull	Davenport (1), Saylorville (1), Red Rock (5)
Glaucous Gull	Omaha (1), Des Moines (1), Red Rock (1)
gull sp.	Neal Smith NWR (17)
Pacific Loon	Red Rock (1)
Double-crested Cormorant	Davenport (2), Burlington (4), Omaha (1)
Turkey Vulture	Canton,SD (1)
Northern Goshawk	Yellow River Forest (1), Spirit Lake (2), Canton, SD (1)
buteo sp.	DeSoto NWR (4)
hawk sp.	Boone County (1)
owl sp.	Green Island (1)
Peregrine Falcon	Davenport (2), Burlington (1), N Linn County (1)
Eastern Phoebe	Clinton (1), Davenport (1)
Loggerhead Shrike	Taylor County (3)
shrike sp.	Cherokee (2), Amana (1), Rathbun (1)
Mountain Bluebird	Dubuque (2)
Townsend's Solitaire	Mason City (1), Amana (1)
Brown Thrasher	Amana (1), Ames (1), SE Webster County (1)
Northern Mockingbird	Green Island (4), Amana (2)
Common Redpoll	Sioux City (10), Sac County (4)
Red Crossbill	Sioux City (15), Omaha (25), Amana (10)
White-winged Crossbill	Cedar Rapids (2)
Vesper Sparrow	DeSoto NWR (1)
Savannah Sparrow	Iowa City (1), Ames (1)
Lincoln's Sparrow	Keokuk (2), DeSoto NWR (1), Mason City (cw)
sparrow sp.	DeSoto NWR (8), Neal Smith NWR (1)
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Iowa City (2)
Eastern Meadowlark	Andalusia (3), NW Clayton County (1)
Western Meadowlark	Westfield (16), Omaha (22), Ida County (4)
Brewer's Blackbird	Davenport (1)
Orange-crowned Warbler	Ames (cw), Union County (2)
Common Yellowthroat	DeSoto NWR (1)

## Iowa Ornithologists' Union 2020 Budget Meeting

*21 March 2020*

**The Iowa Ornithologists' Union (IOU) budget meeting** was held by teleconference Saturday 21 March 2020. President Dennis Thompson called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. Attending were Vice President Pip Fisher; Treasurer Mary Beth Hunt; Secretary Sharon Bauer; and Directors at large Curt Nelson, Eric Ollie, Diane Dentlinger, and Tom Dougherty. Guests attending were Cecille Thompson and Doug Hunt.

**Board action since last Board Meeting:** On 16 March 2020 Dennis Thompson made a motion that in accordance with the Center for Disease Control and Iowa Institute of Health recommendations on containing the spread of the Coronavirus, we cancel the 2020 IOU spring meeting scheduled for 1–3 May in Carroll. Diane Dentlinger seconded the motion and the motion passed.

### NEW BUSINESS

**Elections for new Board members:** With the cancellation of the spring meeting, it will not be possible for the membership to meet and vote. Because of this, Director at large Eric Ollie and Secretary Sharon Bauer have agreed to stay in their current positions until the fall 2020 meeting.

**Treasurer position:** Mary Beth Hunt will be resigning her position as Treasurer on 30 June 2020. Tom Dougherty has agreed to fill in the vacancy as Treasurer. Because Tom is not always at the same physical address during the winter, after this transition the address for the IOU will be set up to Dennis and Cecille Thompson's address. As Membership Coordinator, Cecille is always notified when checks are received so she'll now physically receive them. Checks will be deposited electronically. Tom will handle all other Treasurer duties.

**Fall meeting:** The Rathbun Bird Club has agreed to host the fall 2020 meeting in Centerville. They currently have not picked a date but will be looking to late September or early October. Ty Smedes, who was slated to be the spring meeting keynote speaker, will not be available for the fall meeting. There was some discussion on possibly bringing a speaker from Cornell's eBird to address the group. Denny will make some inquiries on what this presentation would look like. Carroll has agreed to be the site of the spring 2021 meeting.

**June Michigan trip:** There has been much preplanning by Eric Ollie and others for the June Michigan bird trip. Unfortunately due to the current unknown climate with COVID-19, this trip will be postponed until June 2021.

**2020 Budget:** Doug and Mary Beth Hunt presented the budget for 2020. Unfortunately, due to a com-

puter problem the numbers the board was given had not all been updated. There was some discussion on the budget, but without correct numbers there was no vote on the budget. Denny will reach out to the board to approve the budget at a future time.

Mary Beth Hunt reported that the IOU would be receiving a memorial gift from the estate of Dick Tetrault. The gift will be directed to the projects committee for dispersal. There is no stipulation on how this gift is used, but if possible it will be for a Johnson County project. We don't have the final amount but it should be between \$1,000 and \$2,000.

**Credit card:** Denny is in the process of acquiring a credit card for the IOU to facilitate payments for out of state trips and other expenses when checks are difficult to use.

**Get Out and Bird Day:** Mary Beth proposed that we sponsor or endorse a birding day 2 May in lieu of our cancelled spring meeting. It was generally agreed that promoting birding in the current climate of "social distancing" would be a positive thing. There was discussion on what this would look like and how we would promote a birding day. Mary Beth proposed we have different categories and offer prizes, a virtual spring meeting per se. It was discussed to use our existing online resources to promote the event. Denny will reach out to Ann Johnson on how we might be able to coordinate the event electronically.

Mary Beth Hunt moved to adjourn the meeting. Tom Dougherty seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Meeting adjourned 2:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Bauer, secretary

### **Appended minutes from on-line voting**

2 April 2020: Diane Dentlinger moved to approve 2020 budget submitted by Doug Hunt on 25 March 2020. Kevin Murphy seconded the motion and the motion passed.

17 June 2020: Diane Dentlinger moved to approve Tom Dougherty as acting treasurer effective 1 July 2020 until we hold elections later this year. At that time Tom Dougherty will be nominated as permanent treasurer. Dennis Thompson seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

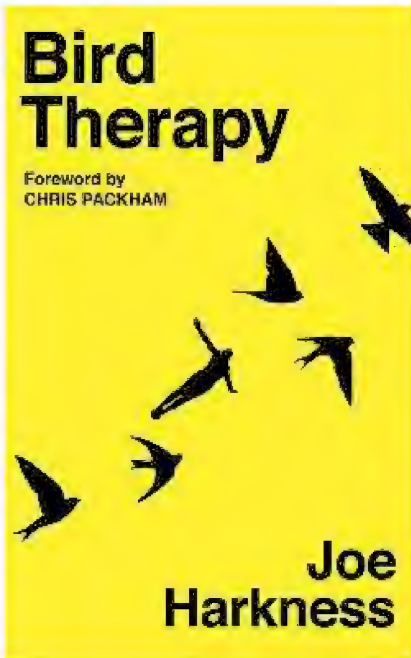
Sharon Bauer, secretary

## **Book Review:** ***Bird Therapy* by Joe Harkness**

*Rick Hollis*

*Bird Therapy* by Joe Harkness. 2019. 272 pages, 13 line drawings. London. ISBN 978-1783527724. \$15.83 (unbound)

The author of *Bird Therapy*, Joe Harkness, is a special needs teacher in Great Britain. The book opens with a preface by Christopher Gary Packham, who has firsthand experience with severe mental illness and acknowledges that this is not an easy subject to discuss. He believes that this book may save lives. The book is crowd funded and, while it may not be available at local book vendors, is for sale on several internet sites.



Many recent articles and other publications mention that getting outdoors or going birding is a healthy practice. The difference between this book and others is that Harkness suffered a mental breakdown and shares his personal story with the reader, describing how watching birds has made his life whole again. The early chapters discuss a bit about his condition. Harkness' blog, also called *Bird Therapy*, has helped to introduce him to others who have experienced healing by spending time outdoors.

After his diagnosis and drug prescriptions, Harkness felt that he wanted to help change himself without medication. Early on he considered trying to feel better by going birding. To this end he took a one day trip with his grandfather to Hickling Broad, a large property owned by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust containing open water, reed beds, fens, grazing marshes, and woodlands. It features blinds and viewing platforms to facilitate birding. This outing was a hit, and the author soon began to make local birding forays and pay more attention to his bird feeder.

After one trip Harkness noted how he felt "lost in the birds" and a lessening of stress. "I was more relaxed than I had ever been before. My breathing rate slowed and I closed my mind to repetitive thoughts and worries. My only focus was observing birds and learning about them. I was losing myself in the birds, in a positive way....The calmness I was feeling was going home and going to work with me. I was starting to feel more relaxed with life in general and found the right place and time to unpack my worries."



In another chapter Harkness describes some of the difficulties he had getting started. One day he traveled to a blind to see a less common bird that had been reported. Two older birders were already there discussing the bird. He asked them how the identification was made, but they simply suggested that he needed a better pair of binoculars, which left him feeling pretty down. Harkness subsequently reached out to local bird groups. He found one which was made up of older people who did not really seem to care about beginners or even getting out in the field. Fortunately, a second group he visited was much more friendly and helpful. There is an important lesson here for new birders as well as experienced ones: Do not let yourself get turned off easily. While most birders are helpful and friendly, some are not. You must keep looking until you find the friendly ones.

This is not the smoothest read, but it is an important book. For those needing help I believe that *Bird Therapy* can offer suggestions on how to heal ourselves and to help each other. This personal account of birding as a healing practice was more compelling than general discussion on the topic, and can give the reader new insights into the many benefits of our chosen pastime.

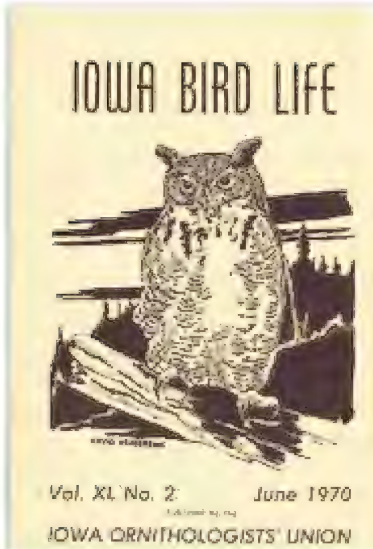
3524 Cumberland Ridge Rd. NE, North Liberty, IA 52317 (xiboia@earthlink.net)



Spotted Towhee, Sugar Valley Boat Ramp, Boone, 21 January 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.

## Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life*

James J. Dinsmore



A study of Downy Woodpeckers at a feeding station in Burlington by Jerry Jackson is the lead article in the June 1970 issue of *Iowa Bird Life*. Working with Mrs. Audrey Niemann at her feeding station in Burlington, Jackson describes the woodpecker's numbers, seasonal occurrence, interactions with other bird species, and other aspects of their biology.

A major article in the issue describes the spring 1970 meeting at Mount Pleasant. A total of 85 people attended the meeting and experienced one of the strongest series of talks I can recall for an IOU meeting with presentations on Friday evening, Saturday morning and afternoon, and at the evening banquet. Topics covered included binoculars, Downy Woodpecker behavior, birds of Brazil and New Zealand, a new birding area called Red Rock Lake,

and the banquet talk on birds of the polar regions by Milton Weller. I also note that three of the speakers eventually were elected as Fellows of the American Ornithological Society. The Sunday field trips found 111 species including 18 species of warblers, many other spring migrants, and a first for a meeting list, a Chuck-will's-widow. Current IOU member Robert Nickolson finished his term as President and was replaced by Beryl Layton of Cedar Rapids. A special citation was given to Fred Pierce, a charter member of the organization, for his many years of service including 30 years as editor of *Iowa Bird Life*.

The spring field reports indicated it had been a good season with many species of waterfowl, shorebirds, and warblers being found and good representations of other species. Of special interest were a report of a nesting Chuck-will's-widow near Ottumwa, large numbers of Pine Siskins remaining past mid-May, and Red Crossbills remaining late in spring with 41 banded at one feeder.

The short notes included one describing a nesting pair of Canada Geese in Kossuth County (a novelty at this time), a late February count of Bald Eagles along the Mississippi River with more than 300 in Iowa, and an "Audubon's" Warbler in Shenandoah.

646 Mallory Hill Drive, The Villages, FL 32162 (oldcoot@iastate.edu)

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** (renewable yearly):

Fledgling (students) \$20 (electronic only), Institutional (domestic) \$30, Institutional (foreign) \$45, Goldfinch \$25 (electronic only), Bluebird \$35, Oriole \$50, Egret \$75, Osprey \$100, Bald Eagle \$250, and Peregrine Falcon \$500+. Membership dues entitle members to receive *Iowa Bird Life* quarterly and to vote and hold office in the Union. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Join, give a gift, or manage your membership on-line at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>. Paper forms for new members and renewals may be mailed to the treasurer. Back issues of *Iowa Bird Life* are available from Membership Coordinator Cecille Thompson, 7503 Wildflower Ct, Johnston, IA 50131 ([cecillethompson@gmail.com](mailto:cecillethompson@gmail.com)).

**INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:**

Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to editor at [vistesparrow@gmail.com](mailto:vistesparrow@gmail.com). Research manuscripts should include abstract, introduction, study area, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited sections and will be sent for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published promptly depending on space available.

**PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS:**

Submit only original, unsized, and unenhanced photos in your camera's JPEG (\*.jpg) format. Photos must be 300 dpi at the size they will be printed (6-1/2" wide by 6-1/2" high for the cover and various smaller sizes inside), so setting your camera to its highest possible resolution is recommended. The editor will do any resizing and enhancing required because any previous adjustments to the photos may make them unusable. Members may upload their photos using the upload tool, Upload IBL Photos, after logging in. If you have trouble with internet connectivity preventing using the tool, email to the editor. Submit graphs or maps as email attachments to your manuscript to the editor.

Deadlines for submission are 1 January for winter issue (Vol. xx[1]), 1 April for spring issue [2], 1 July for summer issue [3], 1 October for fall issue [4]. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

**I.O.U. WEBSITE:** <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>, Ann Johnson, Webmaster

**IOWA RBA:** John Bissell ([john.annabissell@gmail.com](mailto:john.annabissell@gmail.com))

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT:** Deadline for receipt of reports is 15 January. For forms and instructions, contact Christopher J. Caster, 1813 Liberty Lane, Coralville, IA 52241 ([cjcaster@q.com](mailto:cjcaster@q.com)).

**BIRD SIGHTINGS:** Subscribe at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>

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**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Mountain Bluebird, Deere Dike, *Dubuque*, 1 January 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** Orange-crowned Warbler, Twelve Mile Lake, *Union*, 22 December 2019. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

**LAYOUT:** Doreen Van Ryswyk, Mitchellville, IA.

**GRAPHICS:** Paul Hertz, Mason City, IA.

**PRINTER:** Centennial Printing, Louisville, CO.



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# **IOWA BIRD LIFE**

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## **IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



**Summer 2020 • Volume 90 • Number 3**



## IOWA BIRD LIFE

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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life is a quarterly publication of the Union.*

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**Records:** *Paul Hertzell* (Secretary, appointed by committee), 1432 E State St., Mason City, IA 50401 (phertzell@rconnect.com); *Karen Viste-Sparkman* (2020); *Paul Skrade* (2021); *Mark Brown* (2022); *Douglas Harr* (2023); *Lee Schoenewe* (2024); *John Bissell* (2025)

## Sage Thrasher at Saylorville Reservoir

*Stephen J. Dinsmore*

On 4 May 2020 I was walking along the entrance road at Oak Grove Beach Recreation Area of Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County. I soon flushed a bird from a rocky and scrubby area and thought to myself, "That sure looks like a Sage Thrasher." The bird was nearly robin-sized, a cold gray color, had a proportionally long tail with white corners, and flew low with rapid wingbeats, all typical of a thrasher. I quickly relocated the bird and was stunned to find that I was correct (Front cover and Figure 1). The bird wasn't very cooperative, although it eventually teed up in some dead weeds and shrubs and started



*Figure 1. Sage Thrasher, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 4 May 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

singing. I was able to study and photograph the bird at close range from 8:21 to 8:55 a.m. I estimated that the bird was roughly the size of an American Robin, but slimmer, although there were no other birds for direct size comparisons. The bird spent a lot of time on the ground and made several short runs among some rocks. The bill was black, slightly decurved, and roughly half the length of the head. The iris was yellow with a black pupil. The head was a cold gray color with a slightly paler cheek. The throat was white with a thin black whisker. The upperparts were the same cold gray color as the head with faintly darker feather centers. The primaries, secondaries, and their coverts were a brownish-gray color with two narrow white wingbars. The breast was white

with prominent inverted black arrowhead markings throughout (including the flanks), fading to all white on the lower belly and vent. The legs were black. The long tail was brownish-gray with narrow white “corners” formed by pale tips to the outer rectrices. The undersides of the rectrices were black with white tips, decreasing in extent towards the central rectrices. The bird sang several times – a soft series of warbled notes lasting several seconds, without any obvious repeated notes. The smaller size, shorter, all-black bill, underparts pattern, white wingbars, and white tail corners eliminated all other thrashers, especially the similar Bendire’s Thrasher. I was able to take a few photographs and then the bird simply vanished as I was adjusting my camera settings. I searched the area for another hour and never relocated it. The bird was relocated later and was last seen on 5 May. This represents the fourth record of a Sage Thrasher in Iowa, three of which are from Polk County. The previous records are of single birds from 20 December 1952 to 10 January 1953 in West Des Moines, *Polk* (Stiles 1953), 26 December 1964 to 2 January 1965 in Des Moines, *Polk* (*Iowa Bird Life* 35:6), and 23 September to 12 October 1985 at Waterloo, *Black Hawk* (Moore 1986).

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Stiles, B. F. 1953. Sage Thrasher in Iowa: A sight record. *Iowa Bird Life* 23:22–23.

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*Black Tern, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 14 May 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



## Meet an Iowa Birder—Candace Havely

*Stuart Sparkman*



*Candace Havely at Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, Wisconsin.*

Among the friendly faces one might spy at one of IOU's twice-yearly meetings is that of Candace Havely. Candace is Library Director at Hawkeye Community College and an active member of Prairie Rapids Audubon Society (PRAS). She grew up in southeastern Wyoming and came to live in Waterloo ten years ago via graduate school at Arizona State University and career stops in Sterling, Colorado; Burlington, Iowa; and McCook, Nebraska. She has a twin sister, Crystal, a birder living in Cheyenne who volunteers with the Rocky Mountain Raptor Center in Fort Collins, Colorado. Candace always enjoys returning to her childhood home in Wyoming's southeastern corner to visit her mother, where together they appreciate the wonderful birds of the area, which include Golden Eagle, Burrowing Owl, Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk, and Sharp-tailed Grouse.

Candace describes herself as a frequent birder who is a casual lister who enjoys birding as a side activity to travel. She followed her sister into birding as an adult, and regrets not being a birder during her university years in Tucson, despite admitting that our shared hobby might have hindered her academic achievement in one of North America's greatest birding areas. She recalls a "spark bird" experience with a Scarlet Tanager while bicycling in Minnesota. A very positive experience with Nebraska Ornithologists' Union during her brief time in that state led Candace to seek out IOU upon her return to Iowa. She has enjoyed learning a great deal from the statewide birding community as well as that of her area. She particularly mentions Tom Schilke and Francis Moore as helpful friends and guides in her genial involvement with PRAS.

With IOU, Candace has served on the Projects Committee and two terms on the board of directors. She is an active participant in citizen science, including the annual crane count sponsored by the International Crane Center, a bluebird survey for Audubon Climate Watch, and various Christmas Bird Counts: her regulars are Bremer County and Cedar Falls/Waterloo. She also enjoys hawk watching at Grammer Grove Wildlife Area and Hitchcock Nature Center.

Candace spends a good deal of free time in Van Buren County and names Lacey-Keosauqua State Park as her favorite Iowa birding site. Others include Hickory Hills County Park in Tama County and Greenbelt Lake in Waterloo. Outside of Iowa, Necedah and Horicon National Wildlife Refuges in Wisconsin are two favorite places that she makes it a point to visit each year. She finds that there is something about cranes that seeps into her soul, and also finds the song of the Western Meadowlark is a sweet, nostalgic reminder of her growing-up years.

Candace relates that despite spending ample time in eastern Iowa, her first encounter with Eurasian Tree Sparrow was in Bali, Indonesia! Once when returning from a crane survey in Minnesota she spotted an injured Whooping Crane among the common Sandhill Cranes, and had to read its bands in order to report it. A triumphant birding memory recalls a Christmas Bird Count in Colorado during which she, a relative newcomer to birding, spotted a Long-eared Owl—a first species record for that particular count. Instant credibility was established!

In coming years Candace aspires to travel to international destinations for birding. South America and Thailand are two areas she would like to visit. She is close to accomplishing her goal of becoming an Iowa Master Naturalist, and is on course to complete the work this year. She hopes this may lead to lecturing and leading trips for the Iowa Master Naturalists. And, like many a birder will tell you, she wishes to become better at shorebirds and gulls. Don't we all? At our next IOU meeting make it a point to get to know Candace Havenly.

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*Scarlet Tanager, Goeldner Woods County Park, Madison, 22 May 2020.  
Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*

# Report of the Records Committee for 2019

*Paul Hertzel*

In late July, Aaron Brees found a juvenile Heermann's Gull (Figure 1) at Saylorville Reservoir, a first for the state of Iowa, and the 430th species on the checklist. Over the last ten years, we have averaged close to adding one new species each year.

2019 Heermann's Gull

2018 –

2017 White-tailed Kite, Bar-tailed Godwit

2016 Inca Dove

2015 Brown Booby

2014 –

2013 Glaucous-winged Gull

2012 –

2011 Broad-billed Hummingbird

2010 Anna's Hummingbird, Pacific Wren

In addition to a new species, the Iowa checklist acquired a few technical changes through actions of the American Ornithological Society (AOS). The name Common Ground Dove, without a hyphen, replaced Common Ground-Dove “to conform to our guidelines for English names, because the species named ‘Ground Dove’ do not form a monophyletic



Figure 1. Heermann's Gull, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 28 July 2019. Photograph by Aaron Brees, Polk City, IA.

group” (Chesser 2019). There is a single Iowa record for this species from Linn County in 1991 (Fuller 1992). Also, the scientific names of three warblers changed. *Leiothlypis peregrina* is the new name for Tennessee Warbler (formerly *Oreothlypis peregrina*), *Leiothlypis celata* is the new name for Orange-crowned Warbler (formerly *Oreothlypis*), and *Leiothlypis ruficapilla* is the new name for Nashville Warbler (formerly *Oreothlypis*). The AOS also rearranged the internal orderings of cuckoos and anis, plovers, swallows, and

sparrows.

At the annual meeting of the Records Committee, held 26 October 2019 at the Ames Public Library, members discussed seven species which no longer meet the criteria for their status (*Accidental*, *Casual*, *Regular*). To help

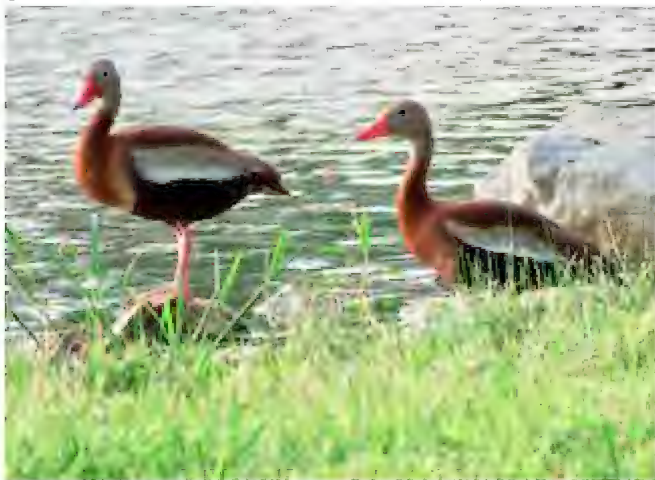


Figure 2. Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Lake Manawa, Pottawattamie, 16 July 2019. Photograph by Loren Padelford, Bellevue, NE.

alleviate the problems of *Regular* species being reported less often than their actual occurrences, the committee elected to loosen the criteria for “*Regular*” to include species found in from 7–10 of the previous 10 years. Historically, the criteria has been from 8–10 years. Since the criteria for “*Casual*” remains 3–8 years, this change gives the committee a window of 2 years of overlap between the

two classifications, and should result in fewer annual re-classifications. These re-classifications can be awkward for the committee and confusing to people in the birding community. This change made it possible for the committee to leave alone four of the seven species which no longer met the criteria for their status since they were *Regular* species that had been recorded in only 7 of the last 10 years. The remaining three species, Parasitic Jaeger, Fish Crow, and Hoary Redpoll, all classified *Accidental*, had been recorded in 4 of the last 10 years making them each *Casual*. The committee enacted the change for all three.

In 2019, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (Figure 2) became the 212th nesting species for Iowa. Two adults and a brood were noticed by homeowners of property in rural Mills County on 9 August (Silcock 2020).

## 2019 RECORDS

A total of 42 records were reviewed by the Committee in 2019 with 36 of these records accepted and 6 not accepted. The Committee appreciates the efforts of those who document Iowa’s bird life and regards each record as deserving thoughtful, careful treatment in its review.

Each record reviewed is assigned a six-digit number (year and sequence number) which is included in this report for future reference. Records are classified as follows: A = Accepted (-S = specimen, -P = photograph, -R = recording, -D = written documentation only) and NA = Not Accepted. In order to be accepted, a record must receive 7 votes on the initial review or more



than 5 votes on a subsequent review. The subcategories A-S, A-P, and A-R reflect the majority's opinion and indicate that physical evidence supports the identification. References to *IBL* are the page of the Field Reports or a special note in *Iowa Bird Life* where the record is cited. Published notes and previous citations may contain more details.

## 2019 RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*): One was photographed 26 June a few miles east of the Missouri River in northern *Mills* (2019-26, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:149, *IBL* 90:5); one persisted at Cedar Lake *Linn* 13 July-7 August (2019-28, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:149, *IBL* 90:5); as many as 11 were at Lake Manawa *Pottawattamie* 13 Jul-7 Aug (2019-21, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:149, 158, *IBL* 90:5); on 9 August, 2 adults with a brood of 10 or 11 week-old young were confirmed on rural property along Allis Road in *Mills*, the first known breeding of this species in the state (2019-27, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 90:19, Silcock 2020).

**Harlequin Duck** (*Histrionicus histrionicus*): A subadult male in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* 3-6 December is the 9th accepted record for Iowa (2019-38, **A-D** 7-0, *IBL* 90:77).

**Red Knot** (*Calidris canutus*): A group of 7 were discovered at Saylorville Reservoir *Polk* 27-29 July (2019-18, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:152).

**Parasitic Jaeger** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*): A light morph juvenile was at Red Rock Reservoir *Marion* on 18, 19 September (2019-31, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 90:25).

**Heermann's Gull** (*Larus heermanni*): A juvenile at Saylorville Reservoir *Polk* 28, 29 July was Iowa's first record of this species (2019-19,

**A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:154, cover 89[3], Brees 2019).

**California Gull** (*Larus californicus*): An adult was below Saylorville dam *Polk* 21, 22 March (2019-03, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:109); another adult was at the Dickinson County landfill *Dickinson* on 29 May (2019-12, **A-D** 7-0, *IBL* 89:109); the year's 3rd adult was at Saylorville Reservoir *Polk* 5 October (2019-35, **A-D** 7-0, *IBL* 90:25); at Red Rock Reservoir *Marion* an adult or near-adult found 8 Dec may have stayed the month when an individual identified as in its third calendar year was photographed there on 3 January 2020 (2019-39, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 90:78).

**Great Black-backed Gull** (*Larus marinus*): A juvenile was on the ice of the Des Moines River at Ottumwa *Wapello* 24 December (2019-41, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 90:79).

**Yellow-billed Loon** (*Gavia adamsii*): A subadult was present in the company of a Common Loon at Brushy Creek Recreation Area *Webster* from at least 12 August until 30 September. This is Iowa's 6th record for this species (2019-29, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 90:26, cover 90[1], Dinsmore 2020).

**Neotropic Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*): A subadult was at Elm Lake *Wright* on 1 June (2019-23, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:155).

**Brown Pelican** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*): One was found at Red Rock

Reservoir *Marion* resting with American White Pelicans 25 May (2019-15, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:109).

**Glossy Ibis** (*Plegadis falcinellus*): At least one was present in a large *Plegadis* group at Dunbar Slough *Greene* 17 April (2019-24, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:110); one on 5, 6 May was present at Errington Marsh *Polk* (2019-05, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:110); one was at Cone Marsh *Louisa* 7 May (2019-07, **A-P** 6-1, 7-0, *IBL* 89:110); one was found foraging in a *Johnson* flooded field 8 June (2019-17, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:156).

**Black Vulture** (*Coragyps atratus*): A single individual was photographed in flight over Ada Hayden Heritage Park *Story* 2 April (2019-25, **A-D** 7-0, *IBL* 89:110).

**White-tailed Kite** (*Elanus leucurus*): Iowa's 3rd record was found in rural *Madison* 19 May. (2019-10, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:110).

**Gyr Falcon** (*Falco rusticolus*): On 31 October, a gray morph juvenile female was drawn to a pigeon lure and captured at the Hitchcock hawk watch banding station in *Pottawattamie* (Figure 3). Measurements were recorded and the bird was banded and released (2019-33, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 90:34, 45-46, 48-49).

**Fish Crow** (*Corvus ossifragus*): A calling bird below the Saylorville dam *Polk* on 11 May was Iowa's 9th accepted record (2019-14, **A-D** 7-0, *IBL* 89:113); two at the Sandpiper Recreation Area at Saylorville Reservoir *Polk* during 31 August-6 October made the 10th record for the state (2019-30, **A-R** 7-0, *IBL* 90:36).

**Rock Wren** (*Salpinctes obsoletus*): A calling bird was at the Oak Grove Recreation Area of Saylorville

Reservoir *Polk* on 26 October (2019-34, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 90:36).

**Mountain Bluebird** (*Sialia currucoides*): An adult female and a second bird that may have been a sub-adult were found 13 December near Deere Dike *Dubuque*. The two stayed in the area the entire winter (2019-40, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 90:84, cover 90[2]).

**Varied Thrush** (*Ixoreus naevius*): A male was at Waterloo *Black Hawk* 18 February-10 March (2019-02, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:82, 120).

**Bullock's Oriole** (*Icterus bullockii*): On 19 May, a female was photographed at a feeder in Ames *Story* (2019-22, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:123).

**Prairie Warbler** (*Setophaga discolor*): 3 territorial males were confirmed at Shimek SF *Lee* 13-17 May (2019-08, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:125); one was found along the Trestle Trail in Des Moines *Polk* 22 May (2019-11, **A-D** 7-0, *IBL* 89:125); one was photographed at FDR Park *Dubuque* 19 May (2019-13, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:125).

**Western Tanager** (*Piranga ludoviciana*): An adult male was photographed in Nevada *Story* 5-7 May (2019-06, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:126); another adult male was at Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* 18 May (2019-09, **A-D** 7-0, *IBL* 89:126).

**Painted Bunting** (*Passerina ciris*): One was north of Sioux City *Plymouth* 13 June (2019-20, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 89:166).

## 2019 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

**Whooping Crane** (*Grus americana*): Although no bands, tags or transmitters were noted on two birds, the brief description of the birds and circumstances best fits individuals from the re-introduced Eastern Mi-

gratory Population (2019-04, NA 3-4).

**Glossy Ibis** (*Plegadis falcinellus*): The documentation included photos of three *Plegadis* individuals, but did not include a description narrowing the identification of any of the individuals to the species level (2019-32, NA 0-7).

**Great Gray Owl** (*Strix nebulosa*): The description did not rule out the more likely Short-eared Owl (2019-01, NA 0-7).

**Black-billed Magpie** (*Pica hudsonia*): A disappointingly brief description followed by comparisons to Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Red-headed Woodpecker left doubt in the minds of four reviewers (2019-16, NA 3-4).

**Fish Crow** (*Corvus ossifragus*): Although the documentation for this report included a photo and a sound recording, neither were thought to be definitive by most members of the committee (2019-36, NA 5-2, 2-5).

**Kirtland's Warbler** (*Setophaga*

*kirtlandii*): A single bird visible intermittently over a 3-minute interval in low light did not give any opportunity for photos. Four reviewers thought the resulting written description left room for the bird to have been a Prairie Warbler (2019-37, NA 3-4).

RE-REVIEWED RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*): At request, the committee revisited a 2013 record of 3 individuals at Lake Ponderosa *Poweshiek* during August 2013. The original review resulted in the record not being accepted because of uncertainty regarding the wildness of the birds. After considering new evidence concerning both a now-obvious range expansion and also a better understood and frequently observed tame behavior of this species, the record was accepted. (2013-30, AP 6-0, IBL 84:18, 129, IBL 90:5, 7).

The recording and preserving of the Iowa ornithological record takes the critical actions of people such as the 52 who provided documentations for the records contained in this report. Listed along with the number of documentations submitted in 2019, they are: Aaron Brees 9, Stephen J. Dinsmore 7, Clayton Will 5, James Forde 5, John Bissell 4, Wendy Vandewalle 4, Reid Allen 3, Brandon Caswell 3, James J. Dinsmore 3, Tyler Harms 3, Tony Moline 3, Mark Brown 2, Ray Cummins 2, Thomas Dougherty 2, Chris Edwards 2, James McCoy 2, Paul Hertzell 2, Paul Roisen 2, David Shealer 2, Gerald White 2, Joshua Ballain 1, Kyle Belcher 1, Fawn Bowden 1, Kathleen Coffin 1, Kathi Cunningham 1, Karen Cyr 1, Jim Demastes 1, Seth Dudley 1, Bill Fitzpatrick 1, Rita Goranson 1, Tom Green 1, David Griffin 1, Beth Janson 1, Ann Johnson 1, Larry and Jan Kraemer 1, Betty Lucas 1, Mike Lukan 1, Kelly McKay 1, Jacob Newton 1, Wolfgang Oesterreich 1, Loren J. Padelford 1, Mark Proescholdt 1, Ross Silcock 1, Paul Skrade 1, Stuart Sparkman 1, Ron Stakland 1, Dennis Thompson 1, Jerry Toll 1, Bill Tollefson 1, Allan Younk 1, Hank Zaletel 1. The Committee sincerely appreciates the efforts of these people in

helping discover, preserve and publish the record of Iowa's bird life.

Committee members for 2019 with years in which their terms expire were: Bill Scheible (2019), Karen Viste-Sparkman (2020), Paul Skrade (2021), Mark Brown (2022), Doug Harr (2023), Lee Schoenewe (2024), and Paul Hertzel (secretary, appointed by the committee). John Bissell was nominated by the committee and subsequently appointed by the Board of Directors to fill a regular term beginning in 2020 and replacing Bill Scheible whose term expired at the end of the year.

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Figure 3. Gyrfalcon, Hitchcock hawk watch banding station, Pottawattamie, 31 October 2019. Photograph by Jenny James.



# Birding Area: Green Island Wildlife Management Area, Jackson County

*Eric Ollie and Tony Moline*

In our estimation Green Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is one of the elite birding locations in the state of Iowa, right alongside more well-known places such as Yellow River State Forest, Shimek State Forest, and Lacey-Keosauqua State Park. It is located in Jackson County between Bellevue and Sabula, along the Mississippi River (Figures 1 and 2). It seems that it is still a relatively unheralded and unknown birding location for most Iowa birders and deserves much more recognition.

Green Island WMA is a 4,064-acre complex of wetlands (50%), uplands (25%), and timber (25%) tucked within the beautiful forested bluffs of the



Figure 1. Location of Green Island Wildlife Management Area in Jackson County, IA.

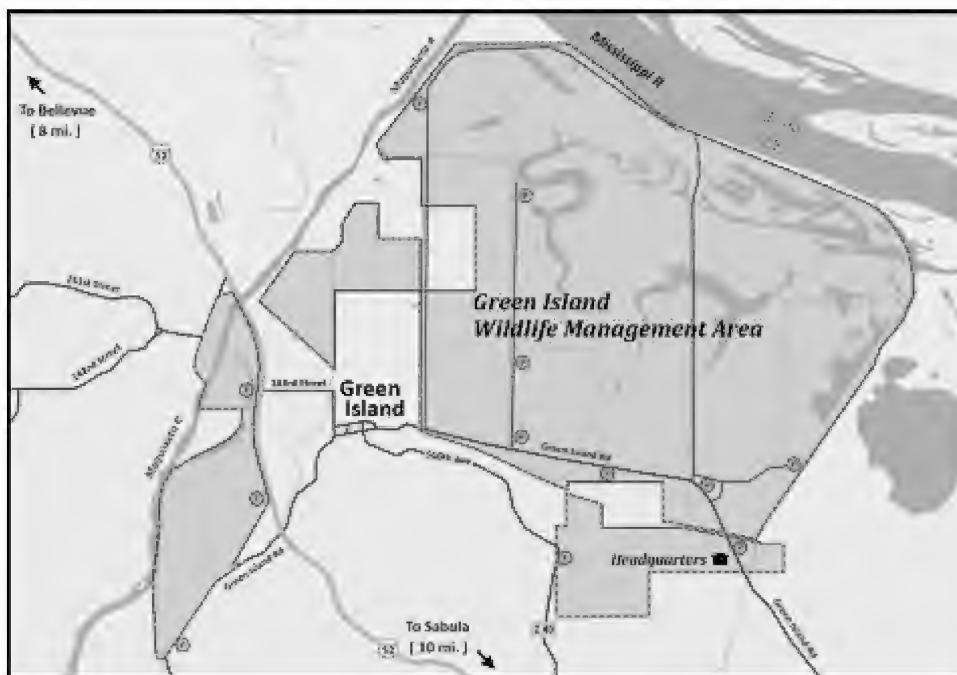


Figure 2. Map of Green Island Wildlife Management Area.

Mississippi River. It is surrounded and sectioned by a system of levees, used by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to manage the habitat, separating the area from the Mississippi River on its northeast and the Maquoketa River on its northwest.

Nesting species include Common Gallinule, Least Bittern, Prothonotary Warbler, and occasionally King Rail (Figure 3). During migration Green Island is filled to the brim with waterfowl, shorebirds, warblers, and much more. In the winter it is one of the most reliable public properties in the state to view Golden Eagles and a great place to find Bald Eagles, hawks, and other raptors. As of June 2020, the eBird list for Green Island



Figure 3. King Rail, Green Island WMA, Jackson, 30 August 2017. Photograph by Tony Moline, Dubuque, IA.

showed 259 species. There are likely additional species that have not been recorded in eBird yet. For the most recent information go to: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1791977?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>. There is an option to select a “Printable Checklist” for the Green Island Area.

The levees provide miles and miles of roads and hiking trails that give close access to the habitat to birders of all levels of experience, interest level, and mobility. Green Island is a perfect place to car bird, and most of the Green Island experience can be had from the seat of your car, but it is also an absolutely incredible nature experience to hike out to and along the rivers on the levees, where motor vehicles are prohibited. You could easily hike five, ten, or even as much as fifteen miles without treading on the same stretch of levee twice. Once out on the levees and away from the roads, you can experience some true social distancing, often without another soul within miles. You can leave civilization behind and experience peaceful solitude surrounded only by the sights and sounds of nature—truly spectacular!

The levee tops are perfectly flat, so they are not strenuous to walk, but this is a wildlife management area, not a park or recreation area, so the levees are significantly vegetated, being mowed infrequently throughout the growing season. Keep an eye out for occasional hidden chuck holes and some wild parsnip and poison ivy here and there. Be aware that ticks are likely to be encountered and take necessary precautions. This is not flip-flop territory. Hiking

boots will be advantageous, along with a good sun hat and some water. The nearest public restroom is in Bellevue or Sabula. Despite the challenges, a hike is still definitely well worth the time and effort—magical!

The Green Island natural area is much larger than many may realize. A



Figure 4. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Green Island WMA, Jackson, 25 July 2014. Photograph by Tony Moline, Dubuque, IA.

newer section on the west side of Highway 52 is primarily restored prairie and floodplain for the Maquoketa River. There are three parking lots along Highway 52 installed by the DNR for this access. A blufftop woodland habitat can be accessed from a trail behind the DNR building or from a parking area on top of the bluff on 500th Avenue. The

east dike eventually connects with the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The property to the north is also all part of that refuge, extending all the way up to Pleasant Creek. About midway there is an access point and parking lot on Highway 52 (look for a sign for Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge). This is a flooded forest environment with a two mile loop trail that is loaded with woodpeckers and is likely great for Yellow-crowned Night-Herons (Figure 4) but is rarely birded in summer due to oppressive numbers of mosquitoes.

It is encouraging to note that the Iowa DNR is working to purchase land to expand Green Island WMA. Despite its distance from much of Iowa, birders who decide to explore this undervisited gem will not be disappointed.

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## Field Reports—Spring 2020

*Connor Patrick Langan*



*Connor Patrick Langan*

### WEATHER

Temperatures were significantly above average during March, with some areas of the state experiencing average temperatures more than 7°F above the historical monthly averages. These above-average temperatures were not conducive for snow accumulation, so a maximum snowfall of only 2.1 inches occurred on 23 March in Bloomfield. High March temperatures resulted in above-average amounts of rainfall, with a monthly total of 1.68 inches of rain in Fort Dodge and Sac City being the most. The highest temperature, 77°F, was recorded on the 29th around Bloomfield and Centerville and again on the 30th at the Rathbun Dam.

Surprisingly, snowfall in southwest Iowa during mid-April represented the largest amounts of snow received during the spring season. Mount Ayr documented the most snow of the season on 17 April with a whopping 10.6 inches of snow. Temperatures dropped to as low as 9°F around Estherville on the 15th and got up to 85°F around Atlantic on the 8th. In the majority of the state, April got the lowest mean precipitation amounts of any month this spring. A total of 1.56 inches of rain around Ankeny throughout the month represented the highest precipitation amount in the state.

The last recorded temperature below freezing was 12 May in a handful of cities between U.S. Route 30 and Iowa Highway 3, while the high was 88°F on 2 May in Sac City. The average temperature throughout May was about 3 degrees below the historical monthly temperature. After a record-setting precipitation total during May of 2019, precipitation totals dropped below historical averages this year. Ottumwa received the most rain out of any area in May with a monthly total of 4.43 inches.

### HABITAT, GENERAL TRENDS

A global pandemic due to the COVID-19 virus created an unprecedented time in our country. There were many birders who limited travel and focused their efforts on their local area. Others used their free time to explore new locations around the state, leading to the discovery of several notable bird species. This spring presented many new challenges that were difficult to overcome at times, but birding constantly provided a means of escaping the struggles of daily life.

Waterfowl migration was in full swing by the onset of spring thanks to warm March temperatures that eliminated most of the ice and snow during



the early stages of the month. Reported numbers of both dabbling and diving ducks noticeably increased this spring, with most of the highs from spring 2019 being crushed by the highs of spring 2020. Though the early thaw was a benefit to waterfowl, it seems that it prompted species such as Snow Buntings to depart from the state early in spring. With minimal flooding and precipitation totals below historical averages, shorebird habitat was plentiful this spring. Consequently, a fantastic total of 33 shorebird species was observed this spring.

Though the number of nomadic species, namely finches, increased in number this spring, overall numbers were markedly reduced. Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch, and Pine Siskin were reported in far fewer counties and in lesser numbers than the previous two springs. Despite average temperatures below those of the historical means during the months of April and May, record early dates were reported for a notable 20 species this spring. The mild temperatures throughout April and May prompted a few species to linger late into the spring, as record late dates were reported for 10 species. Hermit Thrush, in particular, was a species that continued to be frequently observed much later in the spring than is typical.

## UNUSUAL SPECIES

The following accidental or casual species were documented in the state this spring: *Selasphorus* species, Ruff, Great Black-backed Gull, Glossy Ibis, Burrowing Owl, Fish Crow, Sage Thrasher, Mountain Bluebird, Prairie Warbler, Western Tanager, Lazuli Bunting, and Painted Bunting. Twelve accidental or casual species is average for the spring season. After several springs with consistent appearances, Glossy Ibis, Fish Crow, and Prairie Warbler are seemingly becoming regular spring sightings. The Sage Thrasher observed in *Polk* made for the first observation of the species in Iowa since 1985.

A Bewick's Wren was once again detected at the Argyle Junkyard in *Lee* after two consecutive spring seasons with no reports. Species such as Glossy Ibis, White-faced Ibis, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, and Hooded Warbler have been observed in greater numbers and more locations each year for at least the past three years. An incredible count of seven hybrids this spring was more than twice the total of hybrids observed over the past two springs combined. Hybrids observed in the state this spring included Blue-winged Teal x Cinnamon Teal, Blue-winged Teal x Northern Shoveler, Northern Shoveler x Gadwall, Bufflehead x Hooded Merganser, House x Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Spotted x Eastern Towhee, and Golden-winged x Blue-winged Warbler.

## SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Accidental or Casual species, \* = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **AHHP** = Ada Hayden Heritage Park, **A** = area, **L** = lake, **L&D** = lock and dam, **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NM** = national monu-

ment, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **ph** = photo, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **SF** = state forest, **SL** = sewage lagoons, **SI** = slough, **SP** = state park, **WA** = wildlife area, **WMA** = wildlife management area.

**Snow Goose:** A total of 9000 on 7 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* was the high (DH). Continuing through May, 10 on 30 May at Rathbun L *Appanoose* were last (TM).

**Ross's Goose:** A count of 70 on 8 Mar at Hendrickson M *Story* was the high (DyO, BMW, KF). One on 12 May at Big Wall Lake WMA *Wright* was the last (TMH).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Numbers peaked from early to mid-Mar, with the high of 25,500 on 2 Mar at Owego Wetland *Woodbury* (BFH). The last was 30 May at Cedar R access *Johnson* (MHB-ph, m.ob.).

**Cackling Goose:** Reported in low numbers this spring, the high of 110 was 4 Mar in *Dubuque* (KJAB).

**Canada Goose:** Numbers peaked in early Mar with a high of 4900 on 1 Mar at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Mute Swan:** Observed in 6 counties, this species was detected throughout the spring. The record-late observation was made with reports from 30–31 May at Cedar R access *Johnson* (MHB-ph, m.ob.). The 3rd-latest record was tied and broken with reports of one from 26–27 May at Bays Branch WMA *Guthrie* (DTh, CW-ph, m.ob.). Birds observed in May are likely to be birds that have escaped captivity rather than true feral individuals.

**Trumpeter Swan:** Numbers peaked from early–mid Mar, with a high of 300 on 3 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (SD).

**Tundra Swan:** A count of 50 on 14 Mar at L&D 9 *Allamakee* was the high (Frank Fabbro). The last was 30 Mar at Marsh Farm wetland *Dallas* (JB, TJD).

**Wood Duck:** Highs were 105 on 21 May at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (KJM) and 85 on 29 Apr at Princeton WMA *Scott* (JRa).

**Blue-winged Teal:** Singles on 2 Mar at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (JB) and Cone M *Louisa* (FB) were first. Counts of 500 on 14 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (JBo) and 21 Apr at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (JMc) were highs.

**Cinnamon Teal:** Single males were reported in six counties: 4–5 Apr at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (TM-ph, m.ob.), 4–17 Apr in *Madison* (Karen Fieg, m.ob.), 4 Apr at Banner Flats WMA *Warren* (JG), 15–18 Apr in *Woodbury* (JP, m.ob.), 25 Apr at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD-ph), and 25 Apr at Kettleston Hogsback WMA *Dickinson* (DAB, JDJ).

**Blue-winged Teal x Cinnamon Teal:** Four reports of single males: 4 Apr in *Woodbury* (RTo-ph), 11 Apr at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (RJT, AB, JB), 16 Apr in *Woodbury* (BFH, JP), and 16 Apr at Big Marsh WMA *Butler* (MP).

**Northern Shoveler:** Highs were 1000 on 18 Apr at Sweet Marsh WMA *Bremer* (AIB) and 925 on 1 Apr at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (KJM).

**Blue-winged Teal x Northern**

**Shoveler:** A male on 21 Apr at Big Marsh WMA *Butler* was the lone report (NA-ph).

**Gadwall:** Highs were 969 on 1 Apr at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (KJM) and 630 on 28 Mar at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Northern Shoveler x Gadwall:** An apparent male on Mar 8 in *Calhoun* was the lone report (JJo-ph).

**American Wigeon:** The high of 290 was 28 Mar at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (MHB). Last were 20 May at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (David Weiss) and 21 May at Bulger's Hollow RA *Clinton* (KJM).

**Mallard:** Peak numbers were reported from early to mid-Mar, with 8000 on 4 Mar at Green Island WMA *Jackson* being the high (TM).

**American Black Duck:** Reported in eight counties, 4 at Cone M *Louisa* on 3 Mar was the high (JTi). One on 11 May at Cardinal Marsh WMA *Winneshiek* was late (PDBS).

**Northern Pintail:** A count of 3100 on 6 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* was the high (John Williamson). Last was 31 May at Cedar R access *Johnson* (SD).

**Green-winged Teal:** A tally of 680 on 18 Mar at Jester P *Polk* was the high (AB); the last 2 were 17 May at the same location (AB).

**Canvasback:** A high of 1650 was recorded 4 Mar at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (BCC). Singles on 12 May at Anderson L and Jewell SL *Hamilton* were last (TMH).

**Redhead:** Numbers peaked around mid-Mar, and 260 on 16 Mar at Big Marsh WMA *Butler* was the high (MWe). Two on 31 May in *Clay* were last (DSi).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Numbers

increased dramatically this year, with highs of 2573 on 1 Apr at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (KJM) and 1000 on 8 Mar at Otter Creek M *Tama* (KS).

**Greater Scaup:** The high of 10 was reported at Garlock Sl *Dickinson* on 1 Apr (Carson Miller). A male observed from 30–31 May at Cedar R access *Johnson* was last (MHB-ph, m.ob.).

**Lesser Scaup:** A gargantuan total of 12,000 on 31 Mar at Eagle Point P *Clinton* was the high (KJM). The last were 2 on 25 May at Trumbull L *Clay* (DSi).

**Surf Scoter:** After no reports in spring 2019, sightings were reported in *Appanoose*, *Black Hawk*, *Linn*, and *Polk* this spring. Three on 21 May at Lelah Bradley P *Appanoose* tied the 3rd-latest record (Paul Egeland, TNJ-ph).

**White-winged Scoter:** The lone record was 21 Apr at Driscoll's Island *Jackson* (BW).

**Long-tailed Duck:** Reported in four counties: One from 10–12 Mar at Big Creek SP *Polk* (TJD-ph, m.ob.), 2 on 11 Mar at East Okoboji L *Dickinson* (DAB, DSi), one from 17–24 Mar at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS, m.ob.), and one on 16 and 19 Mar at Riverview P *Lee* (JMc-ph, JMi-ph).

**Bufflehead:** Numbers peaked from mid-Mar to early Apr, and 470 on 1 Apr at Green Island WMA *Jackson* was the high (KJM). One on 27 May in *Story* was last (DyO).

**Common Goldeneye:** A total of 125 on 14 Mar in *Allamakee* was the high (Dan Jackson). A late male 21 May at Bulger's Hollow RA *Clinton* was last (KJM).

**Hooded Merganser:** Numbers were low this spring, with a high of 28 at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* on both 1 Mar (MHB) and 12 Apr (JAI).

**Bufflehead x Hooded Merganser:** One was found 5 Apr at AHHP *Story* (WO-ph).

**Common Merganser:** A count of 6100 on 1 Mar at Red Rock Res *Marion* was the high count by a large margin (AB). A male 15 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* was the last (AB-ph).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Numbers peaked from mid-Mar to early Apr, with a high of 142 on 31 Mar at Lake Macbride SP *Johnson* (MDR). Two on 21 May in *Clinton* were last (KMc).

**Ruddy Duck:** Peak numbers were observed from late Mar to early Apr, with a high of 310 on 4 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Six on 29 May at Wilcox WA *Marion* was the high (JG).

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** A count of 28 on 6 May in *Louisa* was the high (KJM).

**Gray Partridge:** No more than 2 were reported at a single location. This species was observed in 14 counties, with reports from *Dallas* and *Polk* being the most southerly.

**Ruffed Grouse:** Two records from *Allamakee*: one on 18 Apr at the LeMaster property (SL) and one on 24 May at Yellow River SF (EEO).

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** All sightings were recorded at Kellerton WMA *Ringgold*. A high of 17 was noted by many throughout the season.

**Wild Turkey:** A high of 50 was 1 Mar in Cedar Falls *Black Hawk*

(KCR).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Peak numbers were noted from early to mid-Apr, with a high of 28 being noted on several occasions in *Jackson* and *Johnson*.

**Horned Grebe:** The first was observed 8 Mar at Saylorville Res in *Polk* (RLC). A total of 7 on 17 Apr was at Pleasant Creek State RA *Linn* (DH). Last was 13 May at Wickiup Hill Learning Center *Linn* (JE).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Five sightings in four counties this spring. The first was observed on 14 Apr at Isthmus P *Dickinson* (LAS).

**Eared Grebe:** Reported in an impressive 14 counties, 2 on 18 Mar at Nahant M *Scott* were close to record-early dates (JW-ph). Thirty-one on 21 May at Storm L *Buena Vista* was by far the highest count (SJD-ph).

**Western Grebe:** Reported in three counties: one on 3 May at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (SJD), 1–3 from 9 May–16 May at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS, m.ob.), and one on 24 May at Blue L *Monona* (RTo, m.ob.).

**White-winged Dove:** No reports this spring.

**Eurasian-collared Dove:** A total of 16 on 1 Mar at the Brenton Feedlot *Dallas* was the high (RJT).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** A bird 11 May at Cedar R Natural Resources Area *Black Hawk* was first (CPL). The high was 10 on 29 May at Preparation Canyon SP *Monona* (KVS, SCS).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Several accounts from 16 May marked the first. Four on 31 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* was the high (MHB). This species was reported in 24



counties.

**Common Nighthawk:** One on 30 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* was first (DGu). A decent spring count of 66 on 23 May in *Polk* was the high (AB).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** The lone report of 4 birds was recorded at the Lucas Unit of Stephens SF *Lucas* on 30 May (TM).

**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** A bird heard 22 Apr at Ice Cave Hill P *Winneshiek* was first (BVe). This species was observed in eight widely scattered counties.

**Chimney Swift:** Firsts were 23 Apr in *Greene* (MTW), *Louisa* (KJM), and *Scott* (KJM). The high was a stellar 160 birds on 19 May in *Scott* (KJM).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Two reports from 26 Apr marked the first: one in *Marshall* (Andy Spellman) and one in Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (SFr). Eleven on 24 May at Pikes Peak SP *Clayton* was the high (TM).

**SELASPHORUS SPECIES:** One was reported 19 May in *Greene* (CR).



*Virginia Rail, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 3 May 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

**Virginia Rail:** An early arrival

on 10 Apr at Deere Dike *Dubuque* was first (DAS). Numbers peaked from late Apr to early May, and 12 on 21 Apr at Goose L *Clinton* was the high (KJM). This species was reported in 23 counties.

**Sora:** The high of 18 was 9 May at Otter Creek M *Tama* (KCR).

**Common Gallinule:** The first was 26 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (JRa). Observed in five counties, the high was 9 on 21 May at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (KJM).

**American Coot:** Numbers peaked early to mid-Apr, and a high of 12,054 was 1 Apr at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (KJM).

**Sandhill Crane:** The high was 45 birds on 26 Mar in *Allamakee* (BR).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Following only two reports last spring, numbers skyrocketed this year, with reports in eight counties. The first was 11 Apr at Big Lake P *Pottawattamie* (Cory Welsh). The high was 7 on 17 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (JF).

**American Avocet:** Two on 6 Apr at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* tied the 2nd-earliest record (JF). A total of 40 on 27 Apr at Deere Dike *Dubuque* was the high (TM).

**Black-bellied Plover:** Four reported on 28 Apr at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* were first (DP, SD). Observed in 11 counties, the last was 24 May at Cedar R access *Johnson* (MHB).

**American Golden-Plover:** The first was 5 Apr at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (JHu, BCC, MHB). A count of 125 on 2 May at Hickory Hills P *Tama* was the high (CPL-ph).

**Semipalmated Plover:** One on 14 Apr at Big Lake P *Pottawattamie*

was first (Chris Olson-ph). A total of 40 on 12 May at Lower Morse L WMA *Wright* was the high (TMH).

**Piping Plover:** One or 2 were reported between 1–8 May at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (DSi-ph, POR).

**Killdeer:** A count of 88 on 6 Apr in *Sioux* was the high (JDJ).

**Upland Sandpiper:** First was 28 Apr in *Sioux* (JDJ). Reported in 18 counties, the high was 5 on 7 May at Kellerton WMA *Ringgold* (JG).

**Whimbrel:** The first was 9 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (TGS). As many as 5 were reported between 11–16 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (JAl, JTi, SMF).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** Ten on 10 Apr at Snyder Bend P *Woodbury* were first (RTo-ph). A count of 37 on 14 Apr at the same location was the high (GLV).

**Marbled Godwit:** The first was 9 Apr in *Appanoose* (TNJ). A count of 15 on 18 Apr at Coralville Res *Johnson* was the high (MHB-ph).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** The first was 9 May at Trumbull L *Clay* (Jason Caddy, LAS). An impressive count of 27 on 14 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* was the high (JF). This species was reported in eight counties.

**RUFF:** A dark morph male in alternate plumage was viewed from 11–16 Apr at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (\*DH-ph, \*BCC-ph, \*CRE, \*JKe, \*MHB-ph, \*PDBS-ph, \*SD, \*FB-ph, \*LGR, \*TMH-ph, \*WV-ph, m.ob.). This report tied the 2nd-earliest record.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** The first was 13 Apr at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (CKr, OK). A total of 36 on 13 May at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* was the high (DSi-ph).

**Sanderling:** The first was 27 Apr at Marsh Farm Wetland *Polk* (JB). A count of 28 on 16 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* was the high (JF).

**Dunlin:** An early arrival on 4 Apr in *Fremont* was first (JGi-ph). A count of 170 on 16 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* was the high (CKr, JMc).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Two on 3 Apr at Snyder Bend P *Woodbury* were first (RTo). Two on 26 May at Deere Dike *Dubuque* were last (DAS).

**Least Sandpiper:** The first was 5 Apr at Snyder Bend P *Woodbury* (RTo). A high of 150 was on 16 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (JMc). This species was observed throughout May.

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Three on 28 Apr at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* were first (JMc). A count of 85 on 25 May at Snyder Bend P *Woodbury* was the high (POR).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** No reports

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** An early arrival on 13 Mar in *Carroll* was first (VW-ph). A count of 800 on 21 Apr at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* was the high (SMF).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Two on 17 Apr at Dunbar Sl *Greene* were first (ABu, BTh). A total of 170 on 24 May at Cedar R access *Johnson* was the high by a large margin (MHB).

**Western Sandpiper:** One on 2 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (JF, MHB-ph, m. ob.).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** One on 27 Apr at Sweet M *Bremer* was first (KCR-details). Two on 25 May in *Fremont* were last (RWa).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** Two on

4 Apr at Green Island WMA *Jackson* were first (BW, m.ob.). Several reports on 12 May marked the last.

**American Woodcock:** Several reports from 1 Mar marked the first. Numbers peaked around mid-Mar, and a report of 15 on 17 Mar at Red Feather Prairie *Polk* was the high (AB).

**Wilson's Snipe:** One on 1 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* was first (PL-ph). A high of 54 was recorded on 8 Apr at KOA Resort on Hess Road *Black Hawk* (CPL-ph).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** A handful of reports on 11 Apr from Dunbar SI *Greene* marked the first. A total of 26 on 14 May at Trumbull L *Clay* was the high (JDJ).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** This uncommon spring migrant was sighted four times this season. A bird at Trumbull L *Clay* 2 May was first (JDJ) while 2 on 30 May at Cedar R access *Johnson* were last (MHB-ph).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Reports from several different counties on 19 Apr marked the first. A count of 17 on 16 May at Ledges SP *Boone* was the high (AK).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** A report 13 Apr at Brenton SI *Dallas* documented the first (AB). Singles on 24 May at AHHP *Story* (HL) and Palisades P *Winneshiek* (BVe) were last.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** One on 7 Mar at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt *Polk* was first (BTh-ph, ABu). Numbers peaked from mid to late Apr, and this species continued through much of May.

**Willet:** Three birds on 18 Apr in *Woodbury* were first (GLV). An exceptional count of 75 birds on 12 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* was the

high (SJD).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** A report of



*Willet, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 30 April 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

3 on 17 Mar at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt *Polk* marked the first (RJT). A count of 3000 on 30 Apr at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* was the high (JE).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** One on 1 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* became the 3rd-earliest arrival (JMc-ph, JDM). A count of 85 on 21 Apr at Coralville Res *Johnson* was the high (SMF).

**Franklin's Gull:** One on 1 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* was first (RJT-ph). A total of 200 on 2 May at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* was the high (DSi-ph).

**Ring-billed Gull:** A total of 4300 on 15 Mar at Lake Macbride SP *Johnson* was the high (MHB).

**Herring Gull:** A count of 80 on 4 Mar at Cedar L *Linn* was the high (BCC). The last was 16 May at L *Pahojha* *Lyons* (DEC).

**Iceland Gull:** Reported in five counties, 3 on 2 Mar at Credit Island P *Scott* was the high (JF).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Reported in a superb nine counties, 4 on 2 Mar at Credit Island P *Scott* was the high (SMF). Two tardy birds on 23

April at Cedar L *Linn* were last (JF).

**Glaucous Gull:** All: one on 1 and 6 Mar at Credit Island P *Scott* (SMF) and one at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 18 Mar (RLC).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:** An adult was observed 22 Mar at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (\*DSi-ph, JDJ-ph). One in first alternate plumage on 24 May at Deere Dike *Dubuque* became the record-late spring observation by a long shot (\*TM, \*DAS-ph).

**Least Tern:** Two on 16 May at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* made for the lone record (SJD).

**Caspian Tern:** One on 22 Apr at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* was first (JDM). Numbers peaked in mid-May with counts of 85 at Cedar L *Linn* (JF) and 61 at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (BW) being registered on 14 May.

**Black Tern:** One on 2 May at McHugh Wetlands *Hamilton* was first (MP). A high of 90 was on 14 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (MTW).

**Common Tern:** First was one on 10 May at AHHP *Story* (WO). A considerable high of 43 was 12 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Forster's Tern:** Three on 11 Apr at Trumbull L *Clay* were first (LAS). Numbers peaked from early to mid-May, and the high of 34 was 7 May at Trumbull L *Clay* (JDJ).

**Common Loon:** First was 22 Mar at Pleasant Creek SRA *Linn* (WV-ph). Numbers peaked from late Mar to mid-Apr, and a high of 11 was 30 Mar at Lost Island-Huston P *Palo Alto* (LAS).

**Neotropic Cormorant:** One was observed 11–23 Apr at Brenton Sl *Dallas* (AB-ph, m.ob.).

### **Double-crested Cormorant:**

Two early arrivals on 6 Mar at Driscoll's Island *Jackson* were first (CKr, TM). Numbers peaked from late Mar to mid-Apr, with 483 on 31 Mar at Bulger's Hollow RA *Clinton* being the high (KJM).



*Neotropic Cormorant and Double-crested Cormorant, Brenton Slough, Dallas, 22 April 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*

**American White Pelican:** Top counts were 1542 on 21 May at Bulger's Hollow RA *Clinton* and 800 on 17 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (JMc).

**American Bittern:** First was 3 Apr at Mines of Spain NM *Dubuque* (KJAB). This species was reported in 19 counties.

**Least Bittern:** First was 9 May at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (Kari Keene). Reported in 11 counties, the high was 3 on 30 May at Otter Creek M *Tama* (TGS).

**Great Blue Heron:** The high count was 42 on 26 May at Cone M *Louisa* (JBo).

**Great Egret:** The record-early date was tied with an observation 7 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (DGu-ph). The high was 160 on 31 May at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (BW).

**Snowy Egret:** First was 11 Apr



at New L *Woodbury* (GLV, RTo-ph). Reported in six counties, the high was 2 on 15 Apr at Big Lake P *Pottawattamie* (KH-ph).

**Cattle Egret:** First was 1 May in Alton *Sioux* (DSw-ph). This species was reported in nine counties.

**Green Heron:** First was 22 Apr at Clover Woods Camp *Boone* (KJ). The high was 18 on 21 May at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (KJM).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Two on 15 Apr at Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor *Story* were first (HL-ph). Reported in 20 counties, a count of 9 on 15 May at Cone M *Louisa* was the high (DGu-ph).

**GLOSSY IBIS:** Observations of this species have been increasing the past few springs, with reports being made in six counties this year. First was 14–15 Apr at Brower L *Woodbury* (\*BFH, \*RTo-ph, m.ob.), one from 17–23 Apr at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (\*VW-ph, \*CW-ph, \*TMH-ph, \*JB-ph, m.ob.), one from 19–25 Apr at Trumbull L *Clay* (\*LAS, JDJ), one on 26 Apr at Kiowa M *Sac* (\*DSi-ph), one 7 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (\*JF-ph), and one 24 May at AHHP *Story* (\*SJD).

**White-faced Ibis:** Five on 11 Apr in *Fremont* were first (JGi-ph). Reported in 26 counties compared to 9 the previous spring, a count of 42 on 19 Apr at Trumbull L *Clay* was the high (LAS).

**Turkey Vulture:** The high was 178 at Turkey Creek Preserve *Johnson* on 30 Mar (LGR).

**Osprey:** First was 26 Mar in *Polk* (RJT-ph). Counts of 4 on 5 Apr at Quarry Springs P *Jasper* (KVS, SCS) and 15 Apr at AHHP *Story* (WO) were highs.

**Golden Eagle:** Reported in 11 counties, last was 24 Apr at Big Marsh WMA *Butler* (HS).

**Mississippi Kite:** The first was 14 May in *Polk* (RJT). This species was only reported in *Polk* and *Wapello* where established breeding populations are known.

**Northern Harrier:** Peak numbers persisted from late Mar to mid-Apr, with a high of 10 at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt *Polk* (RJT).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** The high of 12 was 28 Mar in *Marion* (Jack Johnson). Last was 17 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (RSM).

**Northern Goshawk:** No reports.

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Observed in 28 counties, highs of 3 were reported on several instances in *Black Hawk*. Birds in *Cerro Gordo* and *Greene* were outside of their expected state range.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Singles on 11 Apr at Shaver P *Linn* (JE) and KOA Resort on Hess Road *Black Hawk* (CPL) were first. Peak numbers were reached in late Apr, with 85 on 22 Apr at Hickory Hills P *Johnson* being the high (JBo).



*Broad-winged Hawk, Goeldner Woods, Madison, 7 May 2020. Photograph by Reid I. Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*



**Swainson's Hawk:** First was 4 Apr in *Fremont* (JGi-ph). Reported in 17 counties, a spectacular spring total of 25 on 21 Apr at Oak Grove and Big Sioux P *Sioux* was the high (DSw-ph). Reports of an individual at Green Island WMA *Jackson* on 30 Apr (TM-ph) and 9 May (BW) were notable, as this species usually does not stray so far east.

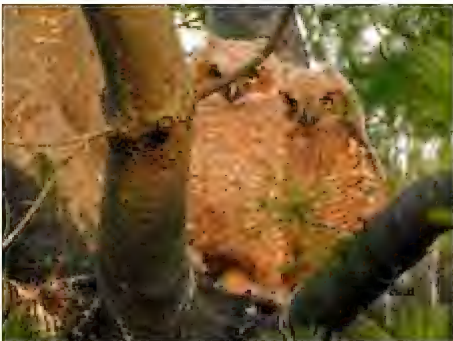
**Red-tailed Hawk:** A total of 34 on 31 Mar at Greenbelt L *Black Hawk* was the high (CPL).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** No more than two were reported at one location. This species lingered well into spring, with one on 7 May at Little Sioux WMA *Clay* being last (LAS, JDJ-details).

**Barn Owl:** No reports.

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** Observed in 17 counties, no more than 2 were reported at any location.

**Great Horned Owl:** A count of 5 on 4 Mar at Scott County P *Scott* was the high (JW).



Great Horned Owls, Jester Park, Polk, 23 April 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.

**BURROWING OWL:** One was observed 1 May in Ida Grove *Ida* (\*DoP-ph).

**Barred Owl:** Nine on 6 May at Indian Sl *Louisa* was the high (KJM).

**Long-eared Owl:** Two reports: One on 21 Mar at Red Feather Prairie *Polk* (BMW, KF) and one 3 Apr in *Jackson* (BW).

**Short-eared Owl:** Reported in eight counties, the high was 5 on 2 Mar at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (Stephen Kirby). This species lingered well into spring, with the last being 11 May in *Greene* (MTW).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** Reported in five counties, a late individual on 12 May at a farmstead in *Mitchell* made for the record-late spring report (Tyler Reams-ph *fide* PDBS).



Northern Saw-whet Owl, Moorhead Park, Ida, 4 March 2020. Photograph by Julie Johnston, Packwood, IA.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Reports on 4 Mar in *Dallas*, *Des Moines*, and *Polk* were first. Numbers peaked in early Apr, and a count of 13 on 4 Apr at Tiffin *Johnson* was



*Trumpeter Swans, Warren, 6 March 2020. Photograph by Christopher Knisley, Colfax, IA.*



*Gray Partridge, rural farm, Boone, 21 May 2020. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*



*Ring-necked Pheasant, Jefferson, 15 May 2020. Photograph by Julie Johnston, Packwood, IA.*



*Eared Grebe, Brenton Slough, Dallas, 5 May 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Cedar River Crossing, Johnson, 30 May 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*





*Black-billed Cuckoo, Dallas, 24 May 2020.  
Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Sora, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 19 April 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Black-necked Stilt, Hawkeye WMA, Johnson, 16 May 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Ruff, Hawkeye WMA, Johnson, 11 April 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Short-billed Dowitcher, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 15 May 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Forster's Tern, McHugh Wetland, Boone, 9 May 2020. Photograph by Reid I. Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*



*Black-crowned Night-Heron, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 21 April 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Burrowing Owl, Ida, 1 May 2020. Photographed by Don Poggensee, Ida Grove, IA.*



*Eastern Phoebe, Brenton Slough, Dallas, 15 April 2020. Photograph by Reid I. Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*



*Yellow-throated Vireo, Sparks Cemetery Area, Boone, 17 May 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Philadelphia Vireo, Oak Grove State Park, Sioux, 24 May 2020. Photograph by Larry Moss, Bellingham, WA.*



*Sedge Wren, Harrier Marsh WMA, Boone, 27 May 2020. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*





*Hermit Thrush, Hanging Rock Woods, Johnson, 16 April 2020. Photograph by Linda Rudolph, Coralville, IA.*



*Wood Thrush, Big Creek State Park, Polk, 18 May 2020. Photograph by Tom Dougherty, Urbandale, IA.*



*Savannah Sparrow, Big Creek Rec. Area, Polk, 12 May 2020. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*



*Henslow's Sparrow, Hawkeye WMA, Johnson, 24 May 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Connecticut Warbler, Hickory Hill Park, Johnson, 21 May 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Yellow-rumped Warbler, Swan Lake, Johnson, 19 April 2020. Photograph by Jayden Bowen, Iowa City, IA.*

the high (DH-ph).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Five on 21 May at Eagle Point P *Clinton* was the high (KJM). Reports from *Emmett* were the most northwesterly.

**Northern Flicker:** Numbers peaked from early to mid-Apr, with a high of 25 on 4 Apr at Tiffin *Johnson* (DH).

**Merlin:** Reported in 19 counties, no more than one was observed at any location. Several persisted into May, with one 18 May in *Story* being notable (TMH). A pair could be observed incubating eggs on a territory established in Waterloo *Black Hawk* during the second half of May (TSS).

**Peregrine Falcon:** First was 1 Mar at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB-ph). Reported in 30 counties, several reports of 2 were the highs.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** First was 6 May at Fontana County P *Buchanan* (DGE). Reported in 25 counties, no more than 2 were observed at a single location.

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** Singles on 2 May at Smith Wildlife Refuge *Pottawattamie* (KH) and Des Moines Y Camp *Boone* (AK) were first. Numbers peaked from mid to late May, and the high was 16 on 25 May at Eagle Point P *Dubuque* (KJAB).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** First observed 12 May at Prairie Lakes P *Black Hawk* (DGE). Reported in 22 counties, this species continues to be detected in a greater number of counties on a yearly basis. A total of 5 on 23 May at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* was the high (NA).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Observations in *Van Buren* on 7 May represented the first (KVS, SCS). Reported in 22 counties, observations in

*Hancock* and *Monona* were notable.

**Alder Flycatcher:** One of our latest spring arrivals, the first was 15 May at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve *Jasper* (Teddy Noll). A terrific count of 12 on 25 May at the Neal Smith Trail *Polk* was the high (KVS, SCS).

**Willow Flycatcher:** Eight on 26 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* was the high (LQ).

**Least Flycatcher:** Singles on 28 Apr at Black Hawk P *Black Hawk* (DGE, NA) and *Greene* (MTW) were first. Large numbers were reported this spring, with a count of 30 on 17 May at East River Valley P *Story* being the high (SSP).

**Eastern Phoebe:** One on 2 Mar in *Des Moines* tied the earliest spring arrival (BWi). A count of 15 on 30 Mar at Sedan Bottoms WMA *Appanoose* was the high (TNJ).

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** A total of 10 on 15 May at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* was the high (KJM).



*Great Crested Flycatcher, Hawkeye WMA, Johnson, 1 May 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*

**Western Kingbird:** First was 2 May at Dunbar SI *Greene* (MTW, EEO, VW). Reported in seven counties, the high of 2 was documented in several locations.

**Eastern Kingbird:** One on 22 Apr in *Van Buren* was first (JJo, TMC, J.G. Chapman). A nice spring count of 41 on 18 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* was the high (AB).

**White-eyed Vireo:** The 2nd-earliest spring record was made 10 Apr at Easter Lake County P *Polk* (DD-details, DTh, m.ob.). Four on 30 May at Shimek SF *Lee* was the high (TW, DWa). Reported in 10 counties, sightings in *Woodbury* and *Palo Alto* were unexpected.

**Bell's Vireo:** Firsts were 2 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (BCC) and Sharon Bluffs SP *Appanoose* (TNJ). A count of 7 on 25 May near Gilbertville *Black Hawk* was the high (TSS).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Firsts were 28 Apr at Walnut Woods SP *Polk* (JG) and *Jefferson* (TB). Peaking in mid-May, the high was 11 on 11 May at Cairo Woods *Louisa* (KJM).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** An early arrival 21 Apr at Hollow View P *Scott* was first (Susa Stonedahl-ph, Forrest Stonedahl). Peaking from early to mid-May, counts of 6 on both 2 May at Hickory Hills P *Tama* (CPL-ph) and 10 May in Ames *Story* (DyO) were highs. Last: 24 May at Lincoln WA *Poweshiek* (TW, DWa).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** First was 3 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (KVS, SCS). Reports of 1–3 birds were made, with the last being 30 May at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (JB).

**Warbling Vireo:** First was 24 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (KVS, SCS). High: 18 on 16 May at AHHP *Story* (ABu, BTh).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** One on 30 Apr at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* was first (JAl). The high was 23 on 21 May at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KJM).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** First was 26 Mar in *Ringgold* (TM-ph). Reported in nine counties, those from *Boone*, *Greene*, and *Story* were the most northerly.



*Loggerhead Shrike, Hawkeye WMA, Johnson, 1 May 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*

**Northern Shrike:** This species was observed in 10 counties with 1–2 birds being reported. Last observed 2 Apr at Saylorville Res in *Polk* (RJT-ph).

**FISH CROW:** Many observations of 1–2 birds were made at Saylorville Res *Polk* from 4–31 May (\*SJD, \*TMH, \*JB, \*AB, m.ob.).

**Horned Lark:** After highs of more than 100 the past few years, numbers were alarmingly low this spring, with a high of 16 on 6 May in *Louisa* (KJM).

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** One on 3 Apr at Deere Dike *Dubuque* tied the 3rd-earliest record (DAS-details). The high was 41 on 13 Apr at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (Stephanie East, Rodney East).

**Purple Martin:** A male 19 Mar at the appropriately named Purple Martin L Water Resource Area *Polk* is now the 2nd-earliest spring record (RJT-ph). *Story*, *Polk*, and *Johnson*

were strongholds for this species, with each county hosting 40 or more birds into late May.

**Tree Swallow:** A day off from tying the 3rd-earliest spring record, a bird 10 Mar at Green Island WMA *Jackson* was first (CKr, BW). A total of 500 on 26 Apr at Hendrickson M *Story* was the high (EEO).

**Bank Swallow:** Firsts were 21 Apr in *Clinton*, *Jackson*, and *Marion*. Numbers were low this spring, with a count of 50 in *Allamakee* on 19 May being the high (Neil Skoog).

**Barn Swallow:** First was 31 Mar at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS). Numbers peaked from late Apr to mid-May, and, for the third consecutive year, counts of 200 claimed the high.

**Cliff Swallow:** First was 13 Apr at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (CKr, OK). Highs were 400 on 17 May at Hawk-eye WMA *Johnson* (RSM) and 300 on 6 May (DH) at the same location.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** The high was 24 on 1 Apr in *Jackson* (KJM). Two on 28 Apr at Nine Eagles SP *Decatur* were last (Logan Wilson).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** An early arrival on 18 Mar in *Mills* was first (KH). The high was 63 on 21 Apr at Princeton WMA *Scott* (KJM). A late report from Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* on 25 May was the last (TJL).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** With reports from 12 counties, numbers of this nomadic species were drastically reduced compared to the previous spring. Nonetheless, this species lingered well into May, with the last 29 May in *Woodbury* (BC).

**Brown Creeper:** Numbers peaked in early Apr with a count of 6 on 4 Apr at Pike Run WA *Muscatine* (FB). Last was 17 May at the Des Moines Y

Camp *Boone* (AK).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** The record-early date was tied with a report from 4 Apr at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* (AKO-details). The high was 42 on 21 May at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KJM).

**House Wren:** Early arrivals 8 Apr at Jefferson County P *Jefferson* (TMC) and Walnut Woods SP *Polk* (JG) were first. A solid high of 55 was 7 May in *Clay* (JDJ).

**Winter Wren:** Reports on 30 Apr from *Winneshiek* (BVe), *Boone* (KJ), and *Polk* (RJT) marked the last. Reported in 26 counties, the high of 4 was 5 Apr at Hickory Hills P *Tama* (CPL).

**Sedge Wren:** First was 22 Apr at Redbird Farms WMA *Johnson* (LQ). An excellent total of 27 on 9 May at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* was the high (CSc).

**Marsh Wren:** First was 11 Apr at Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor *Story* (SSP-ph). A solid count of 58 at Legacy WA *Hardin* on 12 May was the high (CPL-ph).

**Carolina Wren:** Reports of 1–6 birds were made, with observations in *Allamakee*, *Woodbury*, and many counties in between.

**Bewick's Wren:** After two springs without reports, observations of an individual were once again made at the Argyle Junkyard *Lee*, with the first being 18 Apr (JMc).

**Gray Catbird:** Firsts were 23 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RJT) and *Lucas* (Jodi Ogden). An impressive 60 on 6 May in Cairo Woods *Louisa* was the high (KJM).

**Brown Thrasher:** First was 15 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (KVS). A superb 19 on 26 Apr at Hendrickson



M *Story* was the high (EEO).

**SAGE THRASHER:** The first since 1985, one was widely reported at Saylorville Res *Polk* from 4–5 May (\*SJD-ph, \*AMJ, \*TMH, \*JB, \*AB-ph, m.ob.).

**Northern Mockingbird:** First was 25 Mar in *Van Buren* (TMC). Two in *Appanoose* on 13 Apr was the high (TNJ). Reported in 13 counties, sightings in *Black Hawk*, *Greene*, *Harrison*, *Story*, and *Woodbury* were all outside of the expected range for this species.

**MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD:** A continuing overwintering bird at Deere Dike *Dubuque* was spotted 27 Mar (TM).

**Eastern Bluebird:** A count of 33 on 4 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* was the high (RLC).

**Veery:** Two on 3 May at Des Moines Y Camp *Boone* were first (AK). Peaking in mid-May, highs were 7 on 17 May at East River Valley P *Story* (SSP) and 5 on 19 May at Grammar Grove P *Marshall* (MP).

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** One on 30 Apr at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* was first (BFH). Highs were 14 on 14 May in *Linn* (JE) and 7 on 8 May in Goeldner Woods *Madison* (JG).

**Swainson's Thrush:** A handful of reports from 26 Apr indicated the first. A tally of 82 on 14 May during a nocturnal flight count in *Linn* was the high (JE).

**Hermit Thrush:** A count of 22 on 20 Apr at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* was the high (LGR). Small numbers of this species continued well into May, with the last 12 May at Brinton Timber *Washington* (CHa).

**Wood Thrush:** Reports of singles on 28 Apr in *Johnson*, *Louisa*,

and *Story* marked the first arrivals. A stellar 24 on 15 May at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* was the high (KJM).

**American Robin:** Highs were 221 on 26 Mar in *Poweshiek* (CPL) and 214 on 23 Apr in *Muscatine* (KJM).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** High: 80 on 23 Apr in *Muscatine* (KJM). Reported in 26 counties, birds in *Butler* and *Carroll* were outside of their normal range.

**House x Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Two reports: One on 25 Mar at AHHP *Story* continued throughout the remainder of the season (WO, SSP) and one on 24 Apr in *Polk* (RJT-ph).

**American Pipit:** Reported in 20 counties, an early arrival was on 8 Mar at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt *Polk* (RJT). An impressive high was 65 on 7 Apr at the same location (SSP). The 2nd-latest spring record was 23 May when 2 were at Cedar R access *Johnson* (JMc-details). One on 18 May at Cardinal Marsh WMA *Winnebuck* was also notable (PDBS).

**Purple Finch:** Numbers were down significantly from the past few springs, with 8 observed 12–17 Apr in *Bremer* (KCR). Last was 12 May at Brookside P *Story* (HZ).

**Red Crossbill:** Reported in four counties, highs were 10 on 1 Mar in *Linn* (Paul Morf) and 9 on 19 May in *Johnson* (JTr, Chris Troyer). Also noteworthy was 1 on 15 Mar at the Marshalltown Cemetery *Marshall* (MP) and 3 on 18 Apr in *Kossuth* (MCK).

**White-winged Crossbill:** The lone record was of 2 on 6 Mar in *O'Brien* (LAS, JDJ).

**Pine Siskin:** High: 13 on 24 Mar in *Boone* (KJ). The last 3 were 24 May at Fairmount Cemetery *Scott* (Mark Miles).

**Lapland Longspur:** Observed in 12 counties, 400 on 14 Mar in *Dubuque* was the high (TM). The 3rd-latest record was tied when one was observed 12 May at Legacy WA *Hardin* (CPL-details).

**Smith's Longspur:** Reported in 10 counties, 120 on 14 Mar at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt *Polk* was the high (AB-ph). Reports on 23 Apr from *Black Hawk*, *Louisa*, and *Muscatine* were the last.

**Snow Bunting:** Two reports on 14 Mar: one at Hanlontown SI *Worth* (JB) and one in *Bremer* (MWe).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** First was 20 Apr at Big Marsh WMA *Butler* (DGE). A count of 14 on 25 May at Wiese SI *Muscatine* was the high (GAp-ph).

**Chipping Sparrow:** First was 4 Mar in *Fremont* (RWa). Peaking in late Apr, 89 on 23 Apr in *Muscatine* was the high (KJM).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** One on 26 Apr at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* was first (DSi). A count of 20 on 16 May at Gitchie Manitou State Preserve *Lyon* was the high (DEC).

**Field Sparrow:** An early arrival on 8 Mar at Hitchcock Nature Center *Pottawattamie* was first (Sam Manning-ph). The high was 32 on 6 May in Cairo Woods *Louisa* (KJM).

**Lark Sparrow:** Two on 1 Apr in *Jackson* represented the 2nd-earliest spring record (KJM-details). A count of 10 on 1 May at Pechman Creek Delta *Johnson* was the high (TW, DWa).

**American Tree Sparrow:** A

count of 76 on 1 Mar at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* was the high (MHB). One on 24 Apr at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt *Polk* was last (ABu).

**Fox Sparrow:** A count of 27 on 31 Mar in *Jackson* was the high (KJM). A day off from the 3rd-latest record, one on 2 May at Hickory Hills P *Tama* was last (CPL-ph).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** Numbers peaked in late Mar with highs of 100 on 22 Mar at Hendrickson M *Story* (EEO) and 97 on 26 Mar in *Poweshiek* (CPL). Singles on 11 May in *Polk* (PF) and Cedar R Natural Resource Area *Black Hawk* (CPL-ph) were last.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Numbers peaked from early to mid-May with 28 on 6 May in *Louisa* being the high (KJM). A late migrant on 30 May at Cedar R access *Johnson* was last (JMc-ph).

**Harris's Sparrow:** The top 12 counts were reported in counties along the Missouri R, with 35 on 15 Mar at Waubonsie Access WMA *Fremont* being the high (Herschel Thompson). One on 22 May at Rock Creek SP *Jasper* was last (CSc-ph).



Lark Sparrow, Saylorville Lake, Polk, 20 April 2020. Photograph by Tom Dougherty, Urbandale, IA.

**White-throated Sparrow:** A

high count of 220 on 8 May at Hickory Hills P *Tama* was the high (CPL-ph). One 24 May at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* was last (Greg Ongie-ph).

**Vesper Sparrow:** Singles on 28 Mar in *Scott* (RAS) and *Story* (EEO) were first. The high was 14 on 23 Apr in *Muscatine* (KJM).

**LeConte's Sparrow:** First was 2 Apr at AHHP *Story* (DyO). The high was 3 on 23 Apr at Wildin Prairie *Kossuth* (MCK). This species was reported in three other counties: *Clinton*, *Polk*, and *Scott*.

**Nelson's Sparrow:** The only report was of 4 on 6 May at Indian Sl *Louisa* (KJM).

**Savannah Sparrow:** One on 8 Mar at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt *Polk* was first (RJT). A count of 39 on 12 May at Legacy WA *Hardin* was the high (CPL).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Six at Red Feather Prairie *Polk* on 11 Apr were first (Sam Allbee). Reported in 21 counties, a promising count of 45 on 26 May at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* was the high (GAP-ph).

**Song Sparrow:** Large totals were reported this spring, with 76 on 3 May at Deere Dike *Dubuque* being the high (KJAB).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** A total of 34 on 2 May at Hickory Hills P *Tama* was the high (CPL-ph). The 2nd-earliest spring record was tied on 31 May when one was in *Van Buren* (SFr-details).

**Swamp Sparrow:** A count of 84 on 21 Apr at Princeton WMA *Scott* was the high (KJM).

**Spotted Towhee:** Great numbers this spring, with reports in six counties: *Boone*, *Greene*, *Lyon*, *Madison*, *Polk*, and *Sioux*. A female could be

observed in *Polk* from 1 Mar to 29 Apr (PF, m.ob) and the last was 3 May in *Sioux* (JDJ).

**Eastern Towhee:** A report on 3 Mar in *Des Moines* was first (BWi). Highs were 17 on both 23 Apr in *Muscatine* and 6 May at Cairo Woods *Louisa* (KJM).

**Spotted x Eastern Towhee:** One was noted 12 May at Center Lake WMA *Dickinson* (DSi-ph).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Reports from 1 May at Shimek SF *Lee* represented the first (JLF, CRE). Reported in eight counties, 7 at the same location on 22 May was the high (CRE).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** The first arrivals were 27 Mar at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (BFH, RTo). Highs were 125 in *Lyon* on 16 May (DEC) and 100 at Sandhill L *Woodbury* on 23 Apr (GLV).

**Bobolink:** Three on 28 Apr in *Appanoose* were first (TNJ). Numbers were low this spring, with 15 on 18 May at Talmage Hill WA *Union* being the high (JG).

**Western Meadowlark:** The high was 20 on 12 Mar at Snyder Bend P *Woodbury* (BFH).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Reports of vocalizing birds on 1 Mar at Jensen M *Madison* (JG, SBa) and Moeckly Prairie *Polk* (RJT) tied the 2nd-earliest records. A tally of 82 on 23 Apr in *Muscatine* was the high (KJM).

**Orchard Oriole:** Firsts were 29 Apr at Walnut Woods SP *Polk* (RJT) and *Scott* (RAS). The high was 20 on 24 May at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (Joseph O'Keefe).

**Baltimore Oriole:** First was 25 Apr in *Van Buren* (CHa). A count of 32 on 16 May at Deere Dike

*Dubuque* was the high (KJAB).

**Red-winged Blackbird:** Highs were 4 Apr with counts of 5000 at Colo Bogs WMA *Story* (EEO) and 4650 at Timberline WA *Black Hawk* (CPL, Christian Langan).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Firsts were singles on 3 Mar at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS) and Nahant M *Scott* (JW). Numbers peaked in late Mar, with 100 on 23 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* being the high (JBo). Last was 26 Apr at Wiese SI *Muscatine* (LQ).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** Reported in 23 counties, the first was 3 Mar at the Des Moines Y Camp *Boone* (AK). Numbers peaked from early to mid-Apr, with 75 on 10 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* being the high (Susan Nixon). The last was 6 May in *Black Hawk* (CPL-details).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Reported in 18 counties, the first was 3 Mar at Waubonsie Access WMA *Fremont* (Susan Quinn). A total of 21 on 17 Apr at Bays Branch WMA *Guthrie* was the high (AB).

**Ovenbird:** An early arrival on 22 Apr in *Polk* was first (JB). A total of 15 on 17 May at McFarland P *Story* was the high (EEO).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** All: Singles on 15 May at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (KJM), 21 May at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KJM), 29 May at Shimek SF *Lee* (TM), 29 May in *Allamakee* (JOL), and 31 May at Viking Lake SP *Montgomery* (SLO-ph).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** An early arrival on 30 Mar at Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* was first (Jessica Bolser). Reported in 28 counties, observations in *Franklin* and *Woodbury* were notable northern reports.

**Northern Waterthrush:** Ten on

3 May at Deere Dike *Dubuque* was the high (DAS); the last was 28 May at the same location (TM).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** Firsts were 2 May at Palisades-Kepler SP *Linn* (Walt Wagner-Hecht) and *Jackson* (BW). Highs of 6 were in *Guthrie*, *Marshall*, *Polk*, and *Story*. The last were 23 May in a handful of counties.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** The first was 26 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (NA). A considerable count of 12 on 24 May at Shimek SF *Lee* was the high (JKe).

**Golden-winged x Blue-winged Warbler:** One on 9 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* was identified as a "Brewster's" (AB-ph). One on 29 May in *Allamakee* (JOL-details).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** Two on 21 Apr at Princeton WMA *Scott* were first (KJM). Highs of 12 were in *Clinton*, *Muscatine*, and *Story*.

**Prothonotary Warbler:** Firsts were 26 Apr at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt *Polk* (KVS, SCS) and Lake Macbride SP *Johnson* (RSM).

**Tennessee Warbler:** Several reports on 28 Apr in *Johnson* and *Warren* marked the first. The high was 60 on 23 May at East Lawn Cemetery *O'Brien* (JDJ).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** Firsts were 11 Apr at Walnut Woods SP *Polk* (JG-ph) and George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (AIB). Numbers peaked in early May with highs of 13 on 2 May at Brown's Woods *Polk* (AB) and 6 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (KVS, SCS). Last was 25 May at Brown's L *Woodbury* (POR).

**Nashville Warbler:** One on 22 Apr in *Winneshiek* was first (BVe).



Last were 2 on 29 May at Preparation Canyon SP *Monona* (KVS, SCS).

**Connecticut Warbler:** The record-early report was tied on 6 May when one was at Lost Island-Huston P *Palo Alto* (JDJ-details). Remarkably, this species was more widely reported this spring than last, with reports in 16 counties. Despite being observed in more counties, the high of 2 on 19 May at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* (NA, KCR) was down from a high of 6 last spring. Last was 24 May at Beam Woods *Jones* (CRE).

**Mourning Warbler:** An early arrival on 11 May at McFarland P *Story* was first (DyO). Seven on 19 May at Grammar Grove P *Marshall* was the high (MP).

**Kentucky Warbler:** Singles on 6 May at Woodland Mounds State Preserve *Warren* (JG) and Goeldner Woods *Madison* (SBa) were first. Reported in 20 counties, birds in *Dickinson*, *Lyon*, and *Woodbury* were notable.

**Common Yellowthroat:** One on 23 Apr at Dunbar Sl *Greene* was first (JB). A count of 33 on 22 May at AHHP *Story* was the high (WO).

**Hooded Warbler:** Numbers skyrocketed this spring, with reports being made in 13 counties. One on 23 Apr at Oakland Cemetery *Johnson* was first (JHu, m.ob.). Birds in *Cerro Gordo*, *Monona*, and *Story* were notable.

**American Redstart:** A day off from the 3rd-earliest record, 2 on 28 Apr at Summerset SP *Warren* were first (JG-ph). A total of 68 on 21 May at Eagle Point P *Clinton* was the high (KJM).

**Cape May Warbler:** First was 3

May at Prairie Ridge M *Black Hawk* (TSS). Reported in 25 counties, 3 on 21 May at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* was the high (TM).

**Cerulean Warbler:** One on 26 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* was first (SFr). Reported in 10 counties, observations in *Boone*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Greene*, and *Hardin* were notable.

**Northern Parula:** Three on 7 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* were first (CHa). High: 16 on 21 May at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KJM).

**Magnolia Warbler:** Two reports on 2 May in *Jackson* tied the 3rd-earliest spring record: one at Ozark WA (TW-details, DWa-details) and one at Bob Walton's property (BW). Highs of 13 were in *Story* on 17 May at East River Valley P (SSP) and 18 May at Peterson P (DyO).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** Several reports in *Johnson* and *Scott* on 6 May were the first. Numbers peaked in mid-May, with 8 on 21 May at Eagle Point P *Clinton* being the high (KJM).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** A handful of reports on 2 May from *Jackson*, *Madison*, and *Washington* marked the first. A high of 8 on 22 May was at Lime Creek Nature Center *Cerro Gordo* (Matt Radford).

**Yellow Warbler:** One on 20 Apr in *Johnson* tied the 2nd-earliest record (JTr-ph). Highs of 38 and 26 were at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* on 18 and 21 May, respectively (RWR).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** A day off from the 3rd-earliest record, one on 2 May in *Jackson* was first (BW). High: 20 on 21 May at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KJM).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** One on 28

Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* was first (KVS, SCS). A high of 10 on 19 May was at Ledges SP *Boone* (KJ).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:**

Four reports: One on 6 May in *Louisa* tied the 3rd-earliest record (KJM), one on 18 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), one on 20 May at West P *Cerro Gordo* (MH), and one on 25 May again at Parker's Woods (MH, JK).

**Palm Warbler:** The record-early report was tied with one on 8 Apr at Waterworks Prairie P *Johnson* (JH). High: 43 on 6 May at Indian Sl *Louisa* (KJM). A late migrant on 29 May at Rush L *Palo Alto* was last (LAS).

**Pine Warbler:** One on 11 Apr in *Greene* was first (CR-details). Reports in seven counties made for an average spring, and a high of 3 on 27 Apr was at Eagle Point P *Dubuque* (KJAB-ph).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** Five on 1 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* were first (DyO). Highs were 83 on 9 May at Kettleston Hogsback WMA *Dickinson* (Skip Perkins) and 81 on 19 Apr in *Bremer* (KCR). Last were 25 May at AHHP *Story* (WO) and Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* (TJL).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Two on 5 Apr at Hickory Hills P *Tama* were first (TSS). Highs of 6 were at Lacey-Keosauqua *Van Buren* on 26 Apr (NA) and Eagle Point P *Clinton* on 21 May (KJM).

**PRAIRIE WARBLER:** Now being found with regularity in *Lee*, the first two were 1 May in the Croton Unit of Shimek SF (\*CRE) and again on 9 May (\*BCC-ph, \*JBo).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** First was 28 Apr at Squire

Point Trail *Johnson* (MHB). Eight on 11 May at the same location was the high (Greg Ongie). Last were 25 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and Trumbull L *Clay* (DSi).

**Canada Warbler:** First was 12 May at Colyn WMA *Lucas* (JG). Eight on 17 May at McFarland P *Story* was the high (Jordan Satler). Two on 31 May at Viking Lake SP *Montgomery* were last (SLo-ph).

**Wilson's Warbler:** Reports on 2 May in *Jackson*, *Johnson*, and *Tama* marked the first arrivals. The high was 10 on 19 May at Peterson P *Story* (DyO). Last was 30 May in *Story* (EEO).

**Summer Tanager:** One on 24 Apr in *Henry* was first (JMi-ph). The high was 6 on 18 May at Ashworth and Greenwood Parks *Polk* (RJT).



*Summer Tanager, Clover Woods, Boone, 13 May 2020. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*

**Scarlet Tanager:** Firsts were 27 Apr in *Jefferson* (TMC) and Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (BVL). Numbers peaked in mid-May, with 8 on 17 May at Pikes Peak SP *Clayton* (April Laufenberg).

**WESTERN TANAGER:** Three reports: A male on 28 Apr at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* (\*JP-details), a female on 7 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (\*DTh), and a male observed

from 5–11 May in *Cerro Gordo* (\*CJF-ph, \*PDBS, BVL).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** First was 24 Apr in *Appanoose* (TNJ). High: 36 on 6 May at *Cairo Woods Louisa* (KJM).

**Blue Grosbeak:** First was 9 May at *Hawkeye WMA Johnson* (TW, DWa). Reported in 14 counties, an impressive tally of 6 on 23 May at *Owego Wetland Complex Woodbury* was the high (BC).

**LAZULI BUNTING:** The 2nd-earliest spring record was documented with one on 28 Apr in *Guthrie* (\*CW-ph).

**Indigo Bunting:** A plethora of reports from across the state on 28 Apr marked the first. The high was 42 at *Wildcat Den SP Muscatine* on 15 May (KJM).

**PAINTED BUNTING:** A male in first alternate plumage was present

in *Johnson* from 2–3 May (\*JDM-ph, \*MHB-ph, \*BCC-ph).

**Dickcissel:** First was 30 Apr at



*Painted Bunting, Iowa City, Johnson, 3 May 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*

*Dunbar Sl Greene* (Charles Young). Totals of 28 on 15 May in *Muscatine* (KJM) and 26 May at *Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Polk* (RLC) were highs.

## COMMENT

I owe a big thank you to Tyler Harms for formatting the spring eBird data into a usable format for me for the past two years. It is encouraging to not only see an increase in the number of reports submitted on a yearly basis, but also the amount of coverage given to counties that have historically been seldom birded. A reminder: for a record of a casual or accidental species to be included, it must be accepted by the IOU Records Committee. The resources for submitting a rare bird report can be found on the IOU website.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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## Stranded in Johnson County: Spring 2020 Shorebirding Bonanza

*Brandon Caswell*

The COVID-19 global pandemic will forever change the world as we know it. Despite the obvious severity of the situation, perhaps one positive of the pandemic is that people have been able to go birding more, knowing that for the most part being outside, in relative solidarity, is safe. The consequence of less travel or canceled travel plans has meant that more individuals have confined their birding to favorite local patches: parks, wildlife areas, yards, etc. The 2020 spring season marked the beginnings of a common realization to everyone: all people, including birders, were going to be riding out the pandemic for a long time. This is a recollection of the 2020 spring shorebirding season in Johnson County.

Two things really came together to make spring 2020 a historic year: excellent shorebird habitat conditions at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Coralville Reservoir along with COVID-stranded county birders. A total of 32 shorebird species were found in the county over the course of the spring, with all but Upland Sandpiper and Red-necked Phalarope being found in association with the “big pool” area at Hawkeye WMA.

The season really kicked off 6 April with five American Avocets being seen by Jim Forde at the big pool at Hawkeye WMA. The sighting tied for the 2nd earliest, with the record early being 3 April 2011. The next day Forde found a pair of avocets at Scales Pointe at Coralville Reservoir. In a previous year, that sighting would have beaten the 3rd earliest by one day, but the avo-



Figure 1. Ruff, Hawkeye WMA, Johnson, 14 April 2020. Photograph by Tony Moline, Dubuque, IA.

cets the day before changed that.

On 11 April an ABA rarity, a dark morph male Ruff in high breeding plumage (Figure 1) was found by Dean Hester and myself at the far northeast corner of the big pool at Hawkeye WMA along Highway 965. This is perhaps the only Ruff ever found by birders in Iowa in full breeding plumage. The bird stuck for six days and was seen by many. Perhaps like many Ruff, the bird would be seen nowhere, but then suddenly materialize in front of the observer(s). It seemed to have a pattern of going back and forth between suitable habitat around the Coralville Reservoir Curtis Bridge Road access and the northeast corner of the big pool. These two areas, both before and after the Ruff, were among the hottest places for both shorebird diversity and concentration over the spring. The other really hot place was the shoreline from the northeast corner of the big pool west to the DNR headquarters. The last known sighting was on the evening of 17 April. During the Ruff's stay, a flock of Hudsonian Godwits grew to around 23 on 14 April. Before and after the Ruff stopover would prove to be a *Tringa* spectacle, with thousands of Greater and Lesser yellowlegs staging in the superb habitat. Perhaps this concentration is what drew the Ruff into Hawkeye WMA in the first place.

Mark Brown found an impressive 15 Marbled Godwits along with one Hudsonian Godwit off of Scales Pointe, Coralville Reservoir on 18 April. This may be one of the higher counts on record, although 22 were seen by Jim Forde in spring 2006 at Hawkeye WMA.

On 19 April there was an influx of American Avocets to Coralville Reservoir. That day there were 25 in the vicinity of Sandy Beach Public Use Area, although that number doesn't appear to be unusually high historically. Also of note that day were 11 Hudsonian Godwits at Hawkeye WMA's big pool. A Marbled Godwit was seen the next day at the same location with the continuing Hudsonians.

The 2020 spring was also a banner year for Black-necked Stilts at Hawkeye WMA. On 23 April a single stilt was found by Jim Forde at the end of Curtis Bridge Road access. This same day the big pool had singles of Marbled Godwit and American Avocet, as well as 12 Hudsonian Godwits. On 24 April, Jim Fuller found two separate stilts at Hawkeye WMA's Round Pond. At least one of these birds continued at this location until 3 May.

On 25 April Jim Forde counted a seasonal high of 22 Hudsonian Godwits at Hawkeye WMA's big pool, along with two American Avocets. While as many as 40 Hudsonian Godwits have been seen at Hawkeye WMA in previous years, 22 is a respectable number for the site.

The first spring Willets came on 28 April. That day there were 10 at Sandy Beach, Coralville Reservoir along with one on Hawkeye's big pool and two at Round Pond. Despite the many amazing counts on other shorebird species, spring 2020 would prove to be lackluster for Willet numbers. On 30 April an influx of Wilson's Phalaropes was observed at Curtis Bridge Road access by Jesse Ellis.

The first day of May brought a spike in shorebird diversity with 18 spe-

cies carefully surveyed by Jim Forde. Notables that day were singles of Marbled and Hudsonian godwits, two Willets, two Black-bellied Plovers, and 12 American Golden-Plovers. On the next day Forde found a rare spring Western Sandpiper along Highway 965 of the big pool. Upon closer inspection the bird appeared to be in breeding plumage. That day all five peep species were accounted for in that immediate area.

On 6 May a season high five Black-necked Stilts was seen by Jim Forde on the big pool. This count was just under the eight Forde found in spring 2006.

Three days later Mark Brown reported the first Upland Sandpipers. These were along Atwood Avenue in the far southeast corner of Johnson County.

On 11 May James Huntington reported four Whimbrels at the northeast corner of the big pool at Hawkeye. The next day two birds were relocated in the same general vicinity. Unlike many fleeting Iowa Whimbrel sightings, these two birds stuck around until 16 May and were seen by many! It had been since 27 May 2015 that a single Whimbrel had been in Johnson County, reported by Jim Forde also at Hawkeye. There had been no previous records submitted to the Records Committee or eBird of more than a single Whimbrel in the county going back to at least 1983.

Shorebird diversity continued to increase into mid-May. On 14 May Jim Forde had an impressive 22 shorebird species in the county. He found flocks containing 27 Ruddy Turnstones and 26 Black-bellied Plovers, both seasonal high counts. While this Ruddy Turnstone number is outstanding for Johnson County and a personal Johnson County high count for Jim Forde, the number of Black-bellied Plovers, while notable, appears to be a reasonable count compared to past spring tallies. The next day, James Huntington set out to



Figure 2. Red-necked Phalarope female, Hawkeye WMA, Johnson, 30 May 2020. Photograph by Brandon Caswell, Marion, IA.

exceed Forde's high species count. Huntingon's day ended with an American Woodcock sitting on the sidewalk at Waterworks Prairie Park in Iowa City for shorebird species 23.

On 16 May Jim Forde found 28 Sanderlings in the northeast corner of the big pool, a remarkable number for Johnson County. From basic to alternate plumage, it seemed like just about every possible plumage was in this coherent flock.

By the third week in May warblers seemed to take over the focus, with 21 species on 21 May at Hickory Hill Park. The next day would prove to be another great one. However, the peak of warbler diversity seemed to end as soon as it had begun with these two exceptional days. The shorebirds would continue to show well.

As sort of a "cherry on top" event, a pair of breeding plumage Red-necked Phalaropes (Figure 2) was the 32nd shorebird of the spring season. They were found by Mark Brown on 30 May at the relatively new Cedar River Landing Conservation Area just west of Sutliff. The pair was incredibly tolerant to people, offering unbelievably good looks. Typically, this species is only found in the fall at Hawkeye WMA incredibly far out on the big pool. The last sighting of a pair in breeding plumage in Johnson County was by Jim Forde and Linda Rudolf on 19 May 2015 at Hawkeye WMA.

In conclusion, the 2020 spring shorebird season for Johnson County was likely the best in recent times in terms of diversity and sheer numbers. Shorebird habitat was at its finest; however, habitat conditions over the last half-decade show little difference from 2020. So why was this year such a spectacle? One difference is that shorebird numbers, especially Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, were spiking by mid-April in the thousands. If the saying, "birds attract birds" is true, then perhaps the impressive numbers of large shorebirds and later spike in shorebird diversity could be attributed to the phenomenal yellowlegs numbers. It is worth noting that mid-April saw a majority of north winds, perhaps bottling up the yellowlegs migration. It seems that, even though there may have been a couple favorable days of winds in mid-April, precipitation and the favorable habitat possibly kept shorebirds at Hawkeye WMA. Another notable thing about spring 2020 is that by mid-May shorebird diversity was perhaps at its highest ever recorded. Although not always synonymous, high numbers often helps out diversity. In some of the past several years, although great habitat had persisted, numbers plummeted by mid-May with some years seeing little to no recovery. South winds on the 12th–18th supported an influx of species, but precipitation during that period may have prevented birds from moving on. The other "X-factor", of course, was the many local birders out due to being stranded at home because of COVID-19. With all of the great eyes in constant survey of the shorebird situation, it is no wonder so many excellent birds turned up.

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# An Ibis Spring in Iowa

*Larry Dau*

Spring 2020 in Iowa was truly an Ibis Spring. In recent years White-faced Ibis have been showing up more and more in Iowa with a few scattered sightings each year. Their normal range is in the western United States and south to Mexico. This year they could seemingly be found anywhere there was marshy habitat across the state. Not only that, but they were occurring in good numbers. I found a flock of around 30 at Snake Creek Marsh in Greene County (Figure 1). Even neater was the fact that the rarer Glossy Ibis (Figure 2) and hybrids between the two species (Figure 3) were seen. The Glossy Ibis is a southern and East Coast species seldom seen in Iowa. The hybrid looks much like a Glossy, but has the red eye of the White-faced. So this spring, I feel that anyone who wanted to see ibis in Iowa had their chance. The presence of so many ibis and the mix of species and hybrids inspired my friend Carl Kurtz to write the fun poem below. It reminds me of the humorous poetry of Ogden Nash, which I have always enjoyed.



*Figure 1. A group of White-faced Ibis at Snake Creek Marsh, Greene, 20 April 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Figure 2. Glossy Ibis at Dunbar Slough, Greene, 18 April 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Figure 3. Close up of a hybrid Glossy x White-faced Ibis at Snake Creek Marsh, Greene, 20 April 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

### **Ibis Poem**

*By Carl Kurtz*

Ibises here, Ibises there, Ibises being seen most everywhere.

Odd they are with long curved bills, one has white mascara frills.

Difficult to tell unless in hand.

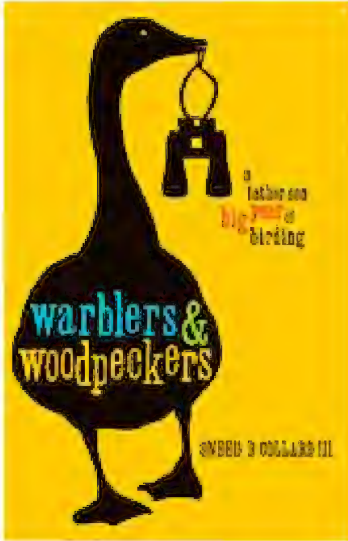
Keep looking and if you see one, may you be lucky enough to know which Ibis it am.

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## Book Review: *Warblers and Woodpeckers: A Father-Son Big Year of Birding*

Maria Story

*Warblers and Woodpeckers: A Father-Son Big Year of Birding* by Sneed B. Collard III. 2018. 256 pages, Mountaineers Books, Seattle, WA, ISBN: 978-1-68051-136-9, \$24.95 (hardcover).



In *Warblers and Woodpeckers*, children's book author Sneed B. Collard III and his 13-year-old son Braden travel the United States for a father-son Big Year. This memoir recounts their adventures, joys, challenges, and memories as they journey across the United States searching for birds. The Big Year starts in their home state of Montana, searching for winter birds and getting the family minivan stuck in a large snow-drift. In the spring, Braden and Sneed travel to rural Arizona and birding hotspots near Houston Texas to catch spring migration. The out-of-state travels are rounded out with a trip to California, where, after hours of searching, they spot a California Condor along the rocky cliffs. Sneed and Braden also explore nearby state and national parks throughout western Montana and are mentored by more experienced birders in their local Audubon chapter.

The challenges encountered throughout the Big Year are primarily logistical and financial. Faced with many different possibilities for birding trips, Braden must carefully weigh his decisions in selecting a location. Sneed struggles to balance his time in Montana between birding with Braden on the weekends, spending time with his wife and younger daughter, or keeping up with his writing commitments that pay the bills. Some months they find 40 new birds for the Big Year, other months only two or three new species. During their travels, Sneed mentors Braden and demonstrates resilience and endurance on long days, while Braden is often first to identify new species and educate Sneed about the species.

As someone who is relatively new to birding, this book was a great introduction to birding hotspots in Texas and Arizona. It is not comprehensive, nor a detailed guide to different locations, but provided an overview of the types of birds one might encounter during spring migration. I also enjoyed learning about the birding opportunities in Montana and felt encouraged to “bird locally” throughout Iowa, recognizing the many different habitats and birds in our state. Although this is Sneed's first book written for adults, he



does a great job blending humor, science, ornithology, travel, and memories shared with his teenage son.

I really enjoyed reading it and experiencing the joys and challenges of a father-son Big Year. It was just the right length at 256 pages and is a great light read.

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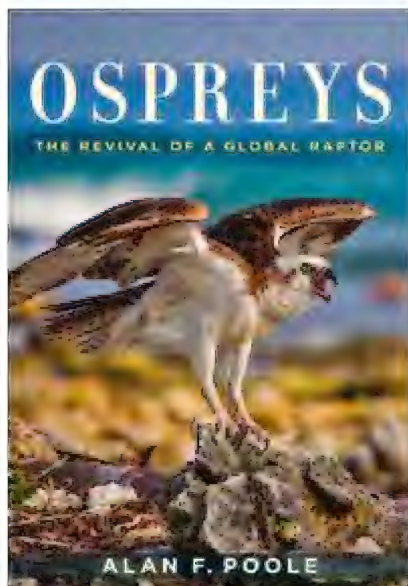
*Yellow-rumped Warbler, Dolliver Memorial State Park, Polk, 16 May 2020. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*



## Book Review: *Ospreys: The Revival of a Global Raptor*

Rick Hollis

*Ospreys: The Revival of a Global Raptor* by Alan F. Poole. 2019. 220 pages, 122 color photos, 20 maps, 4 graphs, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, ISBN 978-1421427157, \$39.95 (hardcover).



Poole likes Ospreys. He has studied them for 30 plus years. This is the second book he has written about them, the first being *Ospreys: A Natural and Unnatural History* (Cambridge University Press, 1989). There is much good information in this book, but I found it to be a bit slow reading. It may have been how the author jumped around—most chapters had separate sections on different populations. The eight chapters are split up into habits and geography. The last four chapters are “At the Nest”, “On the Wing: Incredible Journeys”, “Threats and Solutions”, and “Looking Ahead”. Some chapters have little one to two page inserts on migration of a specific Osprey, various Osprey enthusiasts around the world, etc. There are eight pages of references, a ten page index, and one page of illustration

credits. There are a decent amount of illustrations and maps in this book, with pictures, some photos, and a few paintings on many pages.

Most species we think about in Iowa are rather limited in their geographic distribution. The extremes might be the shorebirds or terns that breed in the Arctic and winter at various places in South America. Ospreys are very different. They breed all the way across the Northern Hemisphere. Some breed south of the U.S., and some winter in Africa or South and Central America. There is also a breeding population in Australia and New Guinea. Although this wide range has produced some variation in habits, they are as a whole remarkably similar. They eat fish and only fish. They nest on trees or tree substitutes—power poles, cell towers, TV antennae, etc.

The habit descriptions point out that they eat a great variety of fish, depending on where they are, but there is little detail. North American breeders seem much more used to the presence of people and boats, while the birds that breed across Eurasia are shyer.

All in all, I was a bit disappointed in this book. It was my hope that there

might be a bit more about Osprey conservation in the U.S.—the work that went on before releases, the various places where Ospreys were reintroduced. Many years ago I helped a bit on a project that was putting up nest poles for Ospreys back east. More recently I marveled at their reintroduction in Iowa. Although there was a description, and a bit more detail about one particular reintroduction in Europe, there were only two sentences about the work done here. So if you want to pick up this book to read about that, you won't find it. If you want to find out more about the birds than is in your typical field guide, pick it up and read it.

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*Dickcissel, Jefferson, 22 May 2020. Photograph by Julie Johnston, Packwood, IA.*

# Iowa Ornithologists' Union

## Board Meeting

*18 July 2020*

**The Iowa Ornithologists' Union (IOU) board meeting** was held by teleconference Saturday 18 July 2020. President Dennis Thompson called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. Attending were Treasurer Tom Dougherty; Secretary Sharon Bauer; and Directors at large Curt Nelson, Eric Ollie, Diane Dentlinger, and Kevin Murphy. Vice President Pip Fisher was absent.

### REPORTS

**Treasurer's report:** Tom Dougherty gave an update on our current financial status. The 2019 balance sheet shows total assets of \$130,872.01. There is a \$50,000.00 CD due in September. Fund balances include \$16,500.00 for the BBA and \$4,978.21 for the Publication Enhancement fund. Income for 2019 was from the Marilyn Irey estate, meeting income, and dues. Tom is working on reconciling numbers from 2019.

### NEW BUSINESS

The Rathbun Bird Club has rescinded the offer to host the fall 2020 IOU meeting due to COVID-19. It was agreed that hosting an in-person meeting this fall would be difficult with the ongoing pandemic. Eric Ollie moved to cancel the fall meeting. Kevin Murphy seconded the motion, and the motion carried. There was discussion of hosting a virtual state meeting where people can report sightings and possibly hosting a Zoom presentation in lieu of a keynote. Denny will put some ideas together and share by email to the board members.

Denny presented an update on the Breeding Bird Atlas and estimat-

ed costs to get the project to publication. The IOU has money set aside to assist with the publication. Books will be available for preorder and available online. Denny will talk to Ann Johnson to finalize the budget for publication of the atlas.

Online election of officers is taking place through 1 August 2020. The slate of officers includes: Tom Dougherty, treasurer; Katie Byerly, secretary; and Curt Nelson, Sharon Bauer, and Wendy VanDeWalle, directors at large.

The Projects Committee is pursuing project ideas for use of monies received from the estates of Marilyn Irey and Dick Tetrault. Their focus is on an infrastructure project that would be birding focused. John Cecil is meeting with Matt Wetrich on how best to open up communication with county conservation organizations to generate ideas. Denny will follow up with the Projects Committee and solicit the IOU membership for input.

The Projects Committee is currently looking for one new member.

Eric Ollie has completed his term on the Events Committee.

Tom Dougherty moved that we keep dues for 2021 at the current levels. Diane Dentlinger seconded the

motion, and the motion passed.

Tom Dougherty moved to adjourn the meeting. Eric Ollie seconded the motion, and the motion carried. Meeting adjourned 2:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Bauer, secretary

**Appended minutes from online voting:**

With the cancellation of the 2020 IOU spring meeting due to COVID-19, online voting for board members took place from 14 July

2020 through 1 August 2020. The slate of officers was approved by majority vote by the IOU membership.

Approved board members are; Tom Dougherty, treasurer; Katie Byerly, secretary; and Curt Nelson, Sharon Bauer, and Wendy Van De-walle, directors at large.

Appended minutes respectfully recorded,

Sharon Bauer, secretary  
4 August 2020

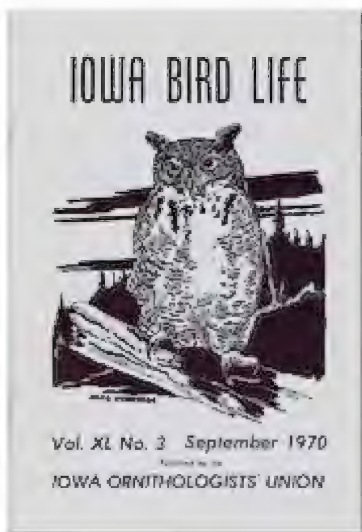


*Yellow Warbler, Hawkeye WMA, Johnson, 3 May 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



## Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life*

James J. Dinsmore



The lead article in the September 1970 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* describes the first banding and nesting record of Chuck-will's-widow for Iowa. The story started on 10 May 1969 when Charles and Darleen Ayres heard one calling at Camp Arrowhead near Ottumwa. On 25 May, they were able to catch a female in a mist net and band it, a first for Iowa. In July they learned that others were being heard at another nearby camp and they saw them there several times. In 1970 they again heard them at this second camp and on 21 May they found a shallow nest among the leaves with two eggs. The eggs hatched on 11 June and by 12 June, the adults and young could not be found. This represented Iowa's first report of nesting Chuck-will's-widow.

In a short article, Richard Crawford, who did graduate work at Iowa State University and was an officer in the IOU, summarized nesting activity by Mourning Doves, Common Grackles, and Red-winged Blackbirds in a pine grove near his northern Missouri home.

The summer season had few interesting finds. Unlike the current June–July season, the report covered June–September and extended well into fall migration. Of some note were an adult and three young King Rails in Greene County, Red Crossbills in Ames into early June, and a flock of 5,000 Purple Martins in early August in Des Moines. Indicative of how Iowa birding has changed, no one reported Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, or Sandhill Cranes, species that now are seen every summer.

The fall meeting was a two-day Saturday–Sunday meeting at Springbrook State Park near Guthrie Center. Eighty people attended, a good turn-out, and they found 91 species on Sunday and 11 more on Saturday, a fairly good list for early September. The warbler list had only seven species with a Black-throated Blue Warbler the best find.

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Note: The December 1970 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* consists entirely of the five-year index for 1966–1970. Thus there will be no Fifty Years Ago column in the next issue of *Iowa Bird Life*—JJD.

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Deadlines for submission are 1 January for winter issue (Vol. xx[1]), 1 April for spring issue [2], 1 July for summer issue [3], 1 October for fall issue [4]. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

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**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Sage Thrasher, Saylorville Reservoir, *Polk*, 4 May 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** Hooded Warbler, Oakland Cemetery, *Johnson*, 23 April 2020. Photograph by Jayden Bowen, Iowa City, IA.

**LAYOUT:** Doreen Van Ryswyk, Mitchellville, IA.

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# **IOWA BIRD LIFE**

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## **IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



Fall 2020 • Volume 90 • Number 4





## IOWA BIRD LIFE

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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life is a quarterly publication of the Union.*

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## Snowy Plovers at Red Rock Reservoir

*Stephen J. Dinsmore*

On 27 June 2020 I was birding the upper reaches of Red Rock Reservoir in Marion County. As I scanned the extensive mudflats off Boxcars boat ramp I spotted two distant, small, pale plovers. The birds were actively foraging and I studied them from 6:55–7:00 a.m. Size was approximately half that of a nearby Killdeer. The black bill was short (equal to the distance from the base of the bill to the eye), straight, and pointed at the tip. The eye was dark. The forehead was white with a small black patch on the forecrown; the rest of the crown and nape were very pale gray. The face and throat were also white with black auriculars. There was a vertical black “slash” mark on the shoulder, but otherwise the underparts were white. The mantle and upperwing coverts were very pale gray. The folded primaries were darker with faded tips that were heavily worn. The legs were gray. I was unable to see the tail pattern. One



*Figure 1. Snowy Plover, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion, 3 July 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

bird was more faded than the other, leading me to conclude that it was a pair (male and female). After a few minutes I stopped watching the birds so I could approach closer. When I tried to refind them they had disappeared. A short time later I saw both birds flying west together and was once again unable to relocate them. On 3 July I returned to the same area in the hope of refinding the

pair and documenting breeding. I searched the extensive mudflats for almost 3 hours with no luck. I then decided to check areas further west by a different boat access. At my last stop I heard a Snowy Plover call from across a small channel. I eventually refound what I assume was the same pair on a patch of



Figure 2. Sand and mud flats used by Snowy Plovers, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion, 3 July 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

higher sand and mud flats along one of the main river channels (Figs. 1–2). As I watched, they were joined by a third bird, clearly a second male based on plumage and territorial interactions with the other male. This second male exhibited some courtship behavior and appeared to have a nest scrape, but otherwise I found no breeding activity. The habitat appeared excellent and I was hopeful that the birds would soon nest. On 9 July I made a return trip and quickly noticed that the habitat had degraded because of significant vegetation growth to a point that the open flats were now covered with short vegetation. I eventually refound a lone male plover, but did not see any signs of breeding activity. Two additional checks of this area did not produce any other plover sightings and the vegetation was now nearly a half meter tall.

This represents the second report of multiple Snowy Plovers in Iowa and the first suggestion of nesting. The only other report of multiple birds was two on 10–13 May 1992 at Riverton Wildlife Area in Fremont County (*Iowa Bird Life* 62:76), almost certainly spring migrants. The Snowy Plover is a rare nesting bird in the Great Plains with recent records from Nebraska and both Dakotas. Nesting in Iowa is certainly possible if the appropriate habitat exists.

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# First Iowa Summer Record for Red Phalarope

*Stephen J. Dinsmore*

On 7 June 2020 I was helping Karen E. Kinkead with wildlife surveys at Eagle Lake in Hancock County. During a break, I scanned the center of the marsh and spotted what was clearly a phalarope swimming near a weed mat. The sun was in my eyes, but the apparent short bill and date suggested it would be a Red-necked Phalarope. We boated around to get a better look and I was stunned to discover that it was an adult Red Phalarope. The bird was very



*Figure 1. Red Phalarope, Eagle Lake, Hancock, 7 June 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

tame and allowed us to boat within a few meters; only rarely did it make short flights and settle back on the water. We watched the bird intermittently from 7:33–9:25 a.m. I returned with a camera for a second visit in mid-afternoon (1:55–2:35 p.m.) and was able to obtain photographs (Figure 1) and video.

The bird superficially resembled a small gull as it swam slowly on the water surface, feeding on weed mats in the center of the marsh. It was alone, so there were no other birds for a direct comparison. I estimated it was perhaps 8–10 inches long with a compact body, tapered, medium-length neck, and small head. The bill was tubular in shape, equal to the length of the head, and bicolored with a bright yellow base and black tip. In a frontal view, the bill tip was horizontally flattened. The head had a white background with fine black and brown streaks on the crown and nape, a small black area in front of and be-



hind the eye, and tan smudging on the auricular. The eye was dark. The throat was mottled black and white. The neck was mottled reddish-brown with smaller white blotches. The breast and flanks had the same color pattern. The feathers of the nape and mantle had dark brown centers with buffy fringes; some feathers were also gray-tipped. The tertials and scapulars had more extensive gray color at the tips. The folded primaries were dark gray/brown. The bird made several short flights during which I was able to see the upperwing and tail patterns (Figure 2). The dark gray/brown upperwing showed faint white edges to the greater secondary coverts and a prominent white strip formed by



Figure 2. Red Phalarope, Eagle Lake, Hancock, 7 June 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

broad white bases to the primaries and secondaries. The uppertail coverts had dark gray centers and broad white edges and tips, which were more prominent on the outermost feathers. The rectrices were dark gray/brown and the same color as the upperwing. In flight, the bird uttered several distinctive sharp “kip” notes, which I recognized as those of a Red/Red-necked Phalarope. On the basis of plumage, I concluded the bird was a molting adult Red Phalarope, and it was probably a male on the basis of the more faded plumage.

This represents the first Iowa summer report of this species, which is a casual fall migrant with most reports in September and October.

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# American Avocets Nesting in Southwestern Iowa

*Stephen J. Dinsmore*

In spring and summer 2020 I found American Avocets at several Iowa locations where nesting was confirmed or suspected. Here, I summarize these sightings and provide additional details on two unsuccessful nesting attempts. On 26 April 2020 I found a pair of American Avocets tending an empty nest at Noddleman Island, Mills County. Both birds were actively courting and copulating along the west shoreline of the pond that sits adjacent to County Road L-31 (195th Street). I returned on 16 May and found no sign of the earlier nest. However, there were now two pairs of avocets courting and digging nest scrapes on the southeasternmost island in the same pond. On 6 June I found two nests, each with four eggs (Fig. 1), near the southern edge of the pond (one



*Figure 1. American Avocet nest, Noddleman Island, Mills, 6 June 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

was actually in the planted cornfield just south of the pond) and a total of seven adult avocets (three pairs and a lone adult). On a final visit on 23 June I found no avocets and both nests were gone. I also checked many nearby wetlands and think it is unlikely that any of the nesting attempts was successful. The second nesting site was M. U. Payne Wildlife Area in Fremont County. Here, I found a pair of courting avocets on 16 May and three adults and nests with three and four eggs respectively on 6 June (Fig. 2). I visited this site again on 23 June and found no avocets and the nests were gone. As at Noddleman Island, I think

it is unlikely that either nest was successful. In addition to these confirmations of nesting, I had three other avocet sightings that hinted at the possibility of nesting. These included a lone alternate plumaged adult on 6 June in suitable nesting habitat at Copeland Bend, Fremont County, a pair courting on 22 June



Figure 2. American Avocet nest, M. U. Payne Wildlife Area, Fremont, 6 June 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

at Saylorville Reservoir, Polk County, and a pair on 27 June and 19 July at the west end of Red Rock Reservoir, Marion County. Collectively, this is an extraordinary number of summer season reports of avocets in Iowa.

These represent the second and third nesting records of American Avocet in Iowa. The only previous record was of a pair with a nest in 2013 at Trumbull Lake in Clay County (Dinsmore and Schoenewe 2013). Avocets nest throughout the Great Plains and the closest regular breeding areas are in the Nebraska Sandhills and in southeastern South Dakota.

#### LITERATURE CITED

Dinsmore, S. J., and L. A. Schoenewe. 2013. American Avocet nesting at Trumbull Lake, Clay County. *Iowa Bird Life* 83:156–157.

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# Black-necked Stilts Nesting at Saylorville Reservoir

*Stephen J. Dinsmore*

In summer 2020 the water levels at Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County remained remarkably stable, which facilitated vegetation establishment and created nesting habitat for a wide variety of waterbirds. The lake was still holding spring runoff into early June, but by mid-June it reached a pool elevation of 837 feet above sea level and remained there through mid-July. On 17 June 2020 I was scanning the upper reaches of the lake off Jester Park when I spot-



Figure 1. Nesting area of Black-necked Stilts, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 2 July 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

ted a pair of Black-necked Stilts. Their distinctive black-and-white appearance, slender body shape with a long neck, and long, pink legs made the identification simple. As I was watching the pair I noted that they appeared to be courting and after a few minutes I observed copulation. Both birds soon retreated into the vegetation and appeared to visit a nest site. The habitat consisted of a large area of shallow water and mudflats surrounded by patches of intermittent emergent vegetation, predominantly Pennsylvania smartweed (*Polygonum pennsylvanicum*), lady's-thumb (*Persicaria maculosa*), and common cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*), interspersed with stands of willow (*Salix* sp.; Figure 1). During subsequent visits I noted more copulation and, by 20 June, the female was sitting on a nest. On 2 July I boated to the site and located a nest with four eggs (Figure 2) that was vigorously defended by both adults. The nest remained above the water line despite rain events that resulted in slight pool



elevation rises in late June and early July. The egg-laying period in this species is 4–5 days and incubation lasts ~23 days (Robinson et al. 2020). I predicted the eggs would hatch no sooner than 12 July (assuming the clutch was complete on 20 June). Finally, on 18 July I spotted the female with four tiny chicks near the nest site; I judged that they had hatched within the last 24 hours.



Figure 2. Black-necked Stilt nest, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 2 July 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

I saw the brood again on 23 July with both adults, a single chick with the female on 26 July, and no chicks thereafter. The pair remained in this area through at least 30 July and then departed without raising a brood. Interestingly, on 23 July I found a second pair of stilts with four flying juveniles nearby; these birds did not

nest at Saylorville and appeared to be migrants from elsewhere. The latter family group remained through 2 August, after which I saw no stilts in this area.

This represents the second record of a Black-necked Stilt nest in Iowa. The only previous record was of a successful nest in Hardin County in 2013 (Caswell and Dinsmore 2014). Stilts continue to increase throughout the Upper Midwest and have nested in all states adjacent to Iowa. If the present pattern continues this species may eventually become a regular Iowa breeding bird.

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## Field Reports—Summer2020

*James J. Dinsmore*



*James J. Dinsmore*

Other than having the remnants of Tropical Storm Cristobal pass through eastern Iowa in early June and growing drought conditions in western Iowa in July, weather-wise it was a fairly typical summer. The best bird finds were Iowa's first-ever summer Red Phalarope and Cackling Goose, and reports of nesting by American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Herring Gull, and Merlin.

### WEATHER

June was somewhat warmer than normal with rainfall close to long-term averages. Temperatures averaged 72.9°F, 3.2°F above normal and tying as the 18th hottest June in 148 years of records. It was especially hot in western Iowa in early June. June 2 was the hottest day with many stations reporting highs in the 90s and three (LeMars, Sioux Center, and Spencer) all reaching 100°F, the high for the month. High temperatures returned on 7 June and in mid-June with temperatures in the upper 80s and 90s. The lowest temperature was 44°F on 1 June at Fayette in northeastern Iowa.

June rainfall averaged 4.85 inches, 0.17 inches below average and tying as the 66<sup>th</sup> wettest June in 148 years of records. Rainfall totals varied from 0.46 inches in Atlantic to 12.26 inches in Oelwein. In general it was wet in eastern Iowa (many stations 2–6 inches above average) and dry in the west (many stations as much as 4 inches below normal).

As is typical for June, a series of thunderstorms swept across the state from the west, with events occurring on 1–3, 4–5, 9–10, 18–19, 21–23, 26–27, and 30 June. All of these storms produced heavy rain with some totals of more than 4 inches. Several of the storms had straight-line winds with gusts of up to 70 mph, and some damage to trees. No significant flooding and only one brief tornado on 18 June in Kossuth County were reported. By the end of June, about 18% of Iowa, all in western Iowa, was considered abnormally dry and approaching drought conditions.

One storm event was different. In early morning 9 June, Tropical Storm Cristobal (reduced to a tropical depression) entered southeastern Iowa, passed over Van Buren and Davis counties, and moved north rapidly across eastern Iowa, leaving the state around 9 p.m. This is only the second tropical system on record to enter Iowa. The first was on 11 September 1900 (remnants of

the storm that wiped out Galveston, Texas). Cristobal was the kind of event that might bring pelagic birds from the Gulf of Mexico north into Iowa, and although one veteran storm watcher was out looking, none were reported from Iowa. It seems likely that a Sooty Tern found on 10 June in Madison, Wisconsin passed over eastern Iowa on its way north.

July temperatures averaged 75.3°F, 1.7°F above normal and tied for the 47th warmest July on record. It was the warmest July since 2012. The average high temperature was 86°F and the average low was 64.7°F, both 1.7°F above normal. The month's highest reading was 98°F on 18 July at Little Sioux in Harrison County and the lowest was 44°F on 16 July at Mason City in Cerro Gordo County.

July rainfall averaged 2.87 inches, 1.63 inches below normal. It was the 41st driest July in 148 years of records. Morning Sun in Louisa County had the most precipitation (8.79 inches) and Holstein in Ida County the least (0.28 inches).

As is usual, a series of thunderstorms moved across Iowa in July, mostly from the west and most bringing up to an inch or more of rain with a few in excess of 2 inches. Most severe was a 7 July storm that had straight-line winds and damaged trees in Buchanan County and produced a 90-mph wind gust near Mount Joy in Scott County. Large hail and straight-line winds were reported on 11 July in eastern Iowa and again on 14 July in Polk and Marion counties causing widespread damage. A storm that moved across southern Iowa on 15 July delivered the most precipitation with Warren and Union counties having more than 3 inches. No tornadoes were reported.

Continuing the reports from June, Moderate Drought conditions were present in west-central and northwestern Iowa in early July. Those conditions gradually extended northwest and northeast and worsened to Severe Drought conditions in west-central Iowa by mid-July. By the end of July, a third of Iowa had Moderate or Severe Drought conditions and by early August, 80% of Iowa had some level of drought conditions, the most expansive drought reported in Iowa since April 2014.

## BIRDS OF SUMMER

### **Habitat Conditions**

In general, it was a fairly mild summer with no major storms, heat waves, floods, or other events to adversely affect nesting success. The gradual spread of drought conditions across Iowa in July may have affected some species, especially those that typically nest late or have second broods.

Perhaps the biggest weather effect for summer 2020 involves the residual effects of the floods that ravaged Iowa in 2019. During 2020 both major rivers largely remained within their normal banks but important effects from last year's floods were still evident this year. Most obvious was the return of nesting Double-crested Cormorants and American White Pelicans to the Clinton spoil islands that they had occupied yearly for more than a decade before abandoning them in 2019 due to high water. Along with those two, single pairs

of Herring Gulls nested on two of the islands.

More hidden and less obvious were the tremendous changes left in the wake of the flooding along the Missouri River. From Harrison County south to the Missouri border, large expanses of open sand bars and sand dunes were left behind, providing habitat for migrating shorebirds and other waterbirds, and nesting habitat for species like American Avocet, Piping Plover, and Least Tern. These changes somewhat duplicate the pattern seen in 2014 in the aftermath of the 2011 flood (Ubias et al. 2014) and are a reminder that even with all of the engineering work that has been done to control the Missouri River's flow, major flood events can still occur and have disastrous effects on land within its natural floodplain.

### **Conservation Issues**

As I have discussed in previous summer reports, various legislative issues often can affect birds and their habitats. This summer a court decision and two funding bills received much attention. The court decision involved the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), probably the most important bird conservation law in the country and the cornerstone of bird protection in the United States. Several years ago, officials in the Department of the Interior decided that the MBTA did not prohibit incidental take (lawful activities that unintentionally might be harmful to or kill wildlife) and began administering the law in that manner. Several major conservation organizations sued the department, and this summer a federal judge ruled in their favor, returning the law to be administered as it had been for more than a century.

Two major bills were passed by congress and signed into law. One, the Great American Outdoors Act, has two parts. One provides \$900 million annually for the Land and Water Conservation Fund which for many years has been an important source of funds to protect natural lands and expand outdoor recreation opportunities. The second part of this bill provides significant funding for five years to repair and upgrade facilities at national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges. Iowa has six national wildlife refuges (Can you name them? Answers later.) but only two small national park units and no national forests.

The other is the Recovering America's Wildlife Act which provides significant funding for five years for programs for the conservation needs of more than 12,000 wildlife species, including birds, that are endangered or threatened or for which there is concern that their populations might decline to that level. Funds from this bill will go to the individual states to protect and manage those species and their habitats. The Iowa DNR has identified almost 1000 Iowa species of greatest conservation need and has been surveying the state to identify where those species are found, monitoring their populations, and determining their conservation needs.

### **Breeding Species**

Besides the return of Double-crested Cormorant and American White Pelican to the Clinton spoil islands, other nesting species of interest includ-



ed American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Piping Plover, American Woodcock, Herring Gull, Least Tern, and Merlin. Trumpeter Swans had a good year with a record number of successful nests and several nests in southern Iowa. After several reports of nesting by Red-necked Grebes last year, I received only a single report this year. Other interesting finds were a Northern Mockingbird nest in Cerro Gordo County, a Eurasian Tree Sparrow also in Cerro Gordo, and more reports of Yellow-breasted Chats and Hooded Warblers than usual.

### **Migrants**

Migration typically is thought of as being over by the start of June but in fact the story is not so simple. This June, one flock of northward molt-migrating Canada Geese, migrants that are already obvious in late May, included a Cackling Goose, Iowa's first-ever summer report. Both late northbound and early southbound shorebirds are seen during the summer months every year. This year late Black-bellied Plovers and Greater Yellowlegs and flocks of Semipalmated and White-rumped sandpipers were found in early June, not long before the first southbound Willets and Marbled Godwits appeared. And as is usual, many southbound shorebirds were appearing by early- and mid-July.

Likewise, a few Black and Forster's terns were still heading north in early June but by late June and early July southward movement was evident for both species. Most interesting this summer was the greater evidence of movement, presumably southbound, of Caspian Terns with at least 30 distinct reports suggesting considerable midsummer movement of this species through Iowa. More Ring-billed and Franklin's gulls had moved into Iowa in July than usual with 3250 Franklin's Gulls at Red Rock a high count.

Fewer late songbirds were noted this year than in 2019 with a few late flycatchers, one vireo, no thrushes, two sparrows, and one warbler reported. Last year a virtual flood of late Alder Flycatchers and many others were reported. Three reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches and four of Pine Siskins were suggestive that more were to come in the fall.

### **Unusual Species**

This was another good year for unusual species with eight Casual species (Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Mottled Duck, Rufous Hummingbird, Snowy Plover, Red Phalarope, California Gull, Fish Crow, and Prairie Warbler) being reported. The eight species ties 2018 and 2006 as the most Casual or Accidental species reported in recent summers. Other unusual species that were found were Cackling Goose, Red-breasted Merganser, White-winged Dove, Laughing Gull, Neotropic Cormorant, Merlin, Blue-headed Vireo, Dark-eyed Junco, and White-crowned Sparrow.

### **SPECIES DATA**

All CAPS = Accidental or Casual species, \* = documented. County names are in *italics*. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbre-

viations used: **ad** = adult, **alt** = alternate (plumage), **A** = area, **Croton** = Croton Unit, Shimek State Forest (ditto Donnellson, Farmington, and Lick Creek units), **juv** = juvenile, **L** = lake, **Lucas** = Lucas Unit, Stephens State Forest (ditto Unionville and Whitebreast units), **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **ph** = photo, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **SI** = slough, **SF** = state forest, **SP** = state park, **WA** = wildlife area, **yg** = young.

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK:** All: up to 11 on 6 Jun at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (Kadynn Hatfield, POR, SJD), and one there 11–13 Jun (\*CW-ph, SM, TM, SD, m.ob.).

**Snow Goose:** All: other than 10 on 6 Jun at M.U. Payne WA *Fremont* (SJD) and 2 on 16 Jul at Tyson's Bend WA *Harrison* (SJD), all singles 1 Jun at Greenfield *Adair* (SLo), 1 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SCS), 2 Jun near Jefferson *Greene* (DyO), 6 Jun at Forney L *Fremont* (SJD), 7 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 19 Jul at Burlington *Des Moines* (Jeff Whited).

**Ross's Goose:** All: one 23 Jun at Garst Pond *Greene* (SJD).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** All: singles 5 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JF), 7, 24 Jun, 5 Jul at McHugh wetland *Boone* (CW, TG), and 26 Jul at Water Works P, Des Moines *Polk* (John Bissell).

**Cackling Goose:** All: one 2 Jun in a flock of molt-migrating Canada Geese heading north over Ada Hayden P *Story* (SJD-details) is Iowa's first summer record.

**Mute Swan:** All: one 2, 3 Jun at Cedar River Crossing *Johnson* (Ry Thompson, JLF).

**Trumpeter Swan:** A record year for Iowa's Trumpeter Swans with 119 nest attempts in 37 counties, at least 97 of which were successful.

Eight nests were found in six counties in the southern third of Iowa, an area they have been slow to colonize (Jones et al. 2020).

**Blue-winged Teal:** Reports came from 23 counties, mostly from north-central and northwestern Iowa where this species typically nests with outliers in *Montgomery* and *Wapello* (m.ob.).

**Northern Shoveler:** All: one 5 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (TMH, SJD), one or 2 on 12, 16–25 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (TM, DSi), and singles 8 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB), 18 Jul at Brower L *Woodbury* (POR), and 28 Jul at Anderson L *Hamilton* (SJD).

**Gadwall:** All: one 3 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (DSi), one 22 Jun at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (BCC), a male 23 Jun at Forney L *Fremont* (SJD), and a male 1 Jul at Jewell sewage lagoon *Hamilton* (SJD).

**American Wigeon:** All: one 18 Jun at New L *Woodbury* (POR).

**MOTTLED DUCK:** Two reports: one 6 Jun near Bartlett *Mills* and *Fremont* (\*SJD-ph), and one 27–31 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (\*SJD, BCC, \*CW-ph, \*KVS, SCS, m.ob.).

**Northern Pintail:** All: a pair 23 Jun at M.U. Payne WA *Fremont* (SJD).

**Green-winged Teal:** One 13 Jun at Blue L *Monona* (Peter Kaestner),

one 23 Jun at M.U. Payne WA *Fremont* (SJD), 1–3 on 20 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF, BCC, AM), 8 on 17 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SG), one female 22 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and one 31 Jul at Saylorville Res (AB).

**Redhead:** All: 3 on 6 Jun in *Pottawattamie* (Dominique De Caprona), one 12 Jun in *Fayette* (PDBS), 2 on 12 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (TM), 8 on 14 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (DSi), and 2 on 20 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Most reports were from Anderson L *Hamilton* with 5 males and one female there 11, 26 Jun (SJD) and 2–5 at Anderson L/Jewell sewage lagoon 4 Jun–24 Jul (SJD). Other reports were singles in *Dickinson*, *Linn*, *Marion*, and *Polk* (LAS, JF, SJD) and 3 on 20 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS).

**Lesser Scaup:** Reports of 1–3 in *Clay*, *Davis*, *Dickinson*, *Hancock*, *Johnson*, and *Polk* (m.ob.) were the usual lingering birds.

**Bufflehead:** All: an injured male near Ames *Story* 1–8 Jun (SJD).

**Hooded Merganser:** Reported from 22 counties, mainly in the Prairie Pothole Region but south to *Fremont*, *Montgomery*, and *Louisa*. Broods were noted in *Dickinson*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Kossuth*, *Linn*, and *Story* (m.ob.), all counties with a history of nesting by this species.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** All: one male 22 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD-ph) is Iowa's first summer record since 2014.

**Ruddy Duck:** One or 2 on 1, 12 Jun at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (Garrett Behrends, SM), one 6 Jun at Kiowa M *Sac* (DSi), one male

11 Jun–28 Jul at Anderson L/Jewell sewage lagoon *Hamilton* (SJD) and a female there 26 Jun (SJD), one or 2 on 12, 27 Jun, 19 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (TM, DSi, JMc), one 23 Jun at Rice L *Worth* (BCC), and 2 on 23 Jun at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (Kris & Craig Rash).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Reported from 38 counties, nearly all in the southern half of Iowa and north to *Monona*, *Boone*, and *Iowa*. Most: 18 on 20 Jun in *Wayne* (Becky Lutz) and 17 on 16 Jul in *Van Buren* (Anna Buckardt).

**Gray Partridge:** Reports from 17 counties, mostly in north-central and northwestern Iowa but south to *Polk* and *Iowa* (m.ob.). Most reports were of one or 2 birds with a family group of 16 on 26 Jun in *Floyd* (AB) the most.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Reported from 25 counties, mostly in the Prairie Pothole Region and other established wetland sites south to Forney L *Fremont* in the west and Cone M *Louisa* in the east (m.ob.).

**Red-necked Grebe:** All: one 12 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (TM), 2 there 21–27 Jun (DSi, MP), and 5 ad and 3 yg 31 Jul at Jemmerman Sl *Dickinson* (LAS).

**Western Grebe:** All: singles 12 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (TM) and 23–27 Jun at Brushy Creek RA *Webster* (RIA, PHA, MP, DTh, Bill Thomas, m.ob.).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** In northeastern Iowa where they are rare, birds were found in *Allamakee* and *Winneshiek* (RJT, AB).

**White-winged Dove:** All: one 20 Jul near Callender *Webster* (Bonnie & Greg Porter), 23 Jul (CW-ph),

and 2 there 31 Jul (Bonnie Porter-ph); and 2 on 5 Jul in West Des Moines *Polk* (\*John Hill).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Far more eBird reports of Yellow-billed than Black-billed cuckoo (1032 vs 47), a ratio of 22 Yellow-billed Cuckoo reports for each Black-billed Cuckoo report (m.ob.).



*Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 17 June 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Reported from 25 counties scattered throughout Iowa. Nearly all reports were of a single bird (m.ob.).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** Other than one 2 Jul at Pioneer Ridge Nature A *Wapello* (RU), all reports were of 1–3 birds 11–30 Jun at or near Lucas Unit *Lucas* (EEO, SD, RJT, m.ob.).

**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** Reports, mostly of one or 2 birds, were from *Appanoose, Decatur, Johnson, Lucas, Monona, Pottawattamie, and Woodbury* (m.ob.). Most reports were from the Lucas or Whitebreast units of Stephens SF. Most: 10 on 13 Jun at the Lucas Unit *Lucas* (EEO). No reports from northeastern Iowa, long a stronghold of the species.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Mostly singles from 61 counties from throughout Iowa (m.ob.). Most:

18 on 23 Jun at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (KJM) and 10 on 20 Jun and 17 Jul at Pikes Peak SP *Clayton* (TM, JKe).

**RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD:** All: one 30, 31 Jul near Rippey *Greene* (\*Colleen Radebaugh-ph, \*CW-ph).

**Virginia Rail:** Singles 3 Jun at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (TM, Craig & Olivia Kruse), 5 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (TMH), 21, 22 Jun at McHugh wetlands *Boone* (DyO, CW), 22 Jun at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (BCC), and 25 Jun at New Albin *Al-lamakee* (William Marengo).



*Virginia Rail, Snake Creek Marsh, Greene, 3 July 2020, Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone IA.*

**Sora:** Reported from nine counties, mostly in the Prairie Pothole Region with most reports of one or 2 birds (m.ob.). Most surprising was one 14 Jun at Belva-Deere RA *Keokuk* (J Reinhard).

**Common Gallinule:** Reported from *Boone, Cerro Gordo, Clay, Dickinson, Hamilton, Jackson, Louisa, and Wright* (m.ob.) including 14 on 5 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (TMH, SJD) and 15 (3 ad and 12 yg) on 25 Jun at Green Island WA *Jackson* (TM).

**American Coot:** Fewer reports than usual. Reports came from 15 counties, mostly of 1–3 birds (m.ob.).



Most: 8 on 21 Jun at Deweys Pasture *Clay* (DSi).

**Sandhill Crane:** Reports came from 32 counties, mostly where cranes are known to nest. Nests or colts were reported from *Kossuth, Louisa, Muscatine, Polk, and Story* (m.ob.). Of interest were sightings of pairs at potential new nesting sites in *Dickinson, Guthrie, Hancock, Marshall, and Warren* (m.ob.). The most was 14 on 7 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (JBo).

**Black-necked Stilt:** A pair 17 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* had a nest with 4 eggs and on 18 Jul was attending 4 newly hatched chicks (SJD). A second pair with 4 flying juv was seen there 23 Jul (SJD) and as many as 7 were there 9–31 Jul (RJT, DyO, RLC, m.ob.). See note this issue.

**American Avocet:** A banner summer for American Avocet. Three ads and 2 nests with eggs at M.U. Payne WA *Fremont* and 7 ads and 2 nests with eggs at Noddleman Island WA *Mills*, both 6 Jun (SJD), constitute Iowa's second and third nesting records. (See note this issue). In addition, 24 were seen 4 Jul in *Fremont* (WRS) and at least eight other occurrences of one or 2 birds in *Buena Vista, Dubuque, Fremont, Louisa, Marion, and Polk* were reported (m.ob.).

**Black-bellied Plover:** All: one 5 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (DSi).

**American Golden-Plover:** All: one 30 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (WV, JKe).

**Killdeer:** High counts were 269 on 7 Jul at Saylorville *Polk* (SJD), 362 on 9 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 793 on 14 Jul at Hendrickson M *Story* (SJD).

**Semipalmated Plover:** First: singles 14 Jul at Hendrickson M *Story* (SJD) and 15 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB). Most: 12 on 27 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**Piping Plover:** All: a pair at a nest with eggs 23 Jun at M.U. Payne WA *Fremont* (SJD) was Iowa's first nesting report since 2014. Others were one 1 Jun at Bartlett-Tabor Rd A *Fremont* (WRS) and 2 on 26 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**SNOWY PLOVER:** All: a pair 27 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD) and 3 there 3, 9 Jul (SJD-ph) constituted Iowa's third summer record and the first since 2016. See note this issue.

**Upland Sandpiper:** Reports, mostly of one or 2, came from 23 counties scattered across Iowa (m.ob.). Most: 7 on 3 Jul in *Osceola* (Dana Sterner).

**Marbled Godwit:** All: one 22 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF, JMc) was the first southbound bird. Others were one 9 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), 2 on 16 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JLF), and one 20 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RJT).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** All: one 26 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** First: 2 on 10 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD) and 2 on 10 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC). Most: 47 on 19 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

**Sanderling:** All: one 14 (3rd earliest), 23, 26 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), one (alt) 19 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), 2 on 25, 31 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RJT, KVS, SCS), and one 28 Jul in *Dubuque Dubuque* (TM).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** All: one 14, 30 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), one 18 Jul at New L *Woodbury* (POR), one 19 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), 4 on 19 Jul at Snyder Bend P *Woodbury* (BFH), and 2 on 31 Jul near Forney L *Fremont* (WRS).

**Least Sandpiper:** First: one 4 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (SJD), 3 on 4 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and one 4 Jul along hwy 9 in *Fremont* (WRS). Most: 250 on 26 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 120 on 30 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Northbound birds on 6 Jun were 338 in *Fremont* and 16 in *Mills* (SJD), and 24 on 13 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Last: one 23 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** All reports were in late July including several reports 28–30 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson*, mostly of 7 or 8 birds (m.ob.) with 23 on 30 Jul the most (BCC). Elsewhere, one 31 Jul near Elk Creek *Worth* (RGo).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** One 22 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JMc) and 2 on 27 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD) may have been summering. First southbound: 2 on 6 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 14 on 9 Jul at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (DSi). Most: 68 on 11 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB), 765 on 19 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 1060 on 31 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Last: flocks totaling 210 in *Fremont* (SJD) and 11 in *Mills* on 6 Jun (SJD), and 20 on 13 Jun at Saylorville Res

*Polk* (SJD) gradually reduced to 3 on 23 Jun at M.U. Payne WA *Fremont* and 2 on 28 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). First southbound: singles 8 Jul at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (DSi) and 11 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC, MHB). Most: 500 on 19 Jul at Snyder Bend P *Woodbury* (BFH) and 189 on 31 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Western Sandpiper:** All: one 19 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD-details).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** First: singles 3 Jul in *Fremont* near Nebraska City, NE (Jerry Giesecking), 4 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and 8 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB). Most: 32 on 15 Jul at Hendrickson M *Story* (DyO) and 11 on 12 Jul at Hawkeye *Johnson* (BCC).

**American Woodcock:** All: an ad and 2 yg 1 Jun in *Black Hawk* (WV) indicated nesting as did 4 on 24 Jun at Cedar Bottoms WA *Muscatine* (Amanda McClellan, Elisabeth Remus, Emily Asche, and Gabe Kovos). Singles in *Johnson*, *Linn*, *Lucas*, *Osceola*, *Pottawattamie*, and *Scott* and 2 at another site in *Johnson* (m.ob.) also were likely local nesters.

**Wilson's Snipe:** First: singles 5 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (TG), 11–16 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF, JDM, MHB, BCC, m.ob.), and 12, 22 Jul in *Dallas* (RJT, CW).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Reports, mostly of one or 2, came from 36 counties scattered across Iowa (m.ob.). Most: 10 on 23 Jul along the Upper Iowa R *Winneshiek* (PDBS) and 14 on 16 Jul on the South Skunk R *Story* (WO).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** First: singles 30 Jun, 3 Jul at Ada Hayden P

(SJD, WO), and 6 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF). Most: 33 on 14 Jul at Hendrickson M *Story* (SJD).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Lingering birds were 19–30 Jun in *Polk*, *Johnson*, and *Hamilton* (SJD, JF, DTh). First southbound birds were 8 on 3 Jul near Percival *Fremont* (AnS) and 4 on 4 Jul along hwy 2 in *Fremont* (WRS). Most: 51 on 10 Jul at Little Swan L *Dickinson* (LAS) and 125 on 15 Jul at Hendrickson M *Story* (DyO).

**Willet:** More reports than usual including 3 on 19 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (AM), one 4 Jul in *Fremont* (WRS), 2 on 9 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), one 9 Jul at George Wythe SP *Black Hawk* (Tommy Stone), 5 on 15 Jul at Colo Ponds *Story* (DOy), 18 on 15 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (Bery Engebretsen), one 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), one 19 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC), and 4 on 20 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RJT, CW).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Last: one 6 Jun at M.U. Payne WA *Fremont* (SJD-ph). First: singles 19 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (AM), 23 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), and 28 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Most: 10 on 19 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Last: 3 females 6 Jun at M.U. Payne WA *Fremont* (SJD) and one female 6 Jun at Copeland Bend *Fremont* (SJD). Southbound: one 19 Jul at Snyder Bend P *Woodbury* (BFH), and one 27 Jul and 2 on 29 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BCC, RJT).

**RED PHALAROPE:** All: a male 7 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (\*SJD-ph) was Iowa's first summer

record. All previous records have been in fall. See note this issue.

**Bonaparte's Gull:** All: one 4 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (DSi-ph).

**Laughing Gull:** All: one (first summer) 15 Jun near Ventura *Cerro Gordo* (NA-ph).

**Franklin's Gull:** Far more numerous and widespread this summer than usual with 15 on 4 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (DSi), 156 on 12 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk*, 320 on 9 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion*, and 3250 there on 19 Jul (SJD). The 425 on 10 Jul at the Dickinson County landfill (LAS) was typical for that site. Elsewhere fewer than 10 were found in 12 mostly north-central and central Iowa counties (m.ob.).

**Ring-billed Gull:** The nesting colony at Meinking M *Dickinson* was not active this summer, apparently because of low water (SJD). The number found in summer, especially in July, has increased greatly in recent years. The 37 on 13 Jun at Saylorville, and 57 on 27 Jun, 330 on 3 Jul, and 650 on 9 Jul, all at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), were more than are present in most years. Many other sites also had more ring-bills than usual this summer (m.ob.).

**CALIFORNIA GULL:** All: one ad 9 Jun on Pool 19 *Lee* (\*SJD).

**Herring Gull:** Two nests, each with 2 yg, on 29 Jun on two separate spoil islands in *Clinton* (SJD) constitute Iowa's first nesting records since 2013 and the fourth and fifth nesting records for the state. Others were one 9 Jun on Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD), 2 on 25 Jun at Spring Run WA *Dickinson* (Dave Miller-details), and one 31 Jul in Dubuque *Dubuque* (TM).

**Least Tern:** All: one 1 Jun near Bartlett *Fremont* (WRS), 9 ads and 2 nests on 6, 23 Jun at M.U. Payne WA *Fremont* (SJD), one ad near Auldon Bar *Fremont* 6 Jun (SJD), one 10–15 Jun at Narrows River Access P *Pottawattamie* (TM, RIA, PHA), up to 3 courting ads on 17, 19 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD, TMH), one 25 Jun at Browns L *Woodbury* (Gerald Von Ehwegen), one ad 16 Jul at Deer Island *Harrison* (SJD), one ad 16 Jul near River Sioux *Harrison* (SJD), 3 ad and 2 yg 16 Jul at Little Sioux WA *Harrison* (SJD), and one 31 Jul at Forney L *Fremont* (WRS). The Little Sioux birds probably bred elsewhere.

**Caspian Tern:** With 30 distinct reports, the mid-summer movement of this species through Iowa is greater than previously suggested. Reports, mostly of single birds but with as many as 5, came from 13 counties (m.ob.). Only four reports were from the western half of Iowa.

**Black Tern:** No one provided evidence of nesting. Late migrants were 14 on 5 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (TMH) and 10 on 11 Jun at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (TM). Southbound birds included 18 on 27 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**Common Tern:** All: one alt ad 5 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD-details, TMH-details), 6 alt ad on 9 Jun on pool 19 *Lee* (SJD-details), one 19 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC), and 5 alt ads on 20 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD-details).

**Forster's Tern:** Two on 6 Jun in *Fremont* (SJD) and one 7 Jun at Forney L *Fremont* (WRS) seemed to be the last northbound birds. Probable non-breeders were one 20 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS) and one

10 Jul at Kettleson Hogsback WA *Dickinson* (LAS) but no evidence of nesting was provided (LAS). Ten on 7 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 2 or 3 on 19 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC, WV) were among the first southbound birds.

**Common Loon:** Other than 2 on 24 Jun at Storm L *Buena Vista* (Ben Wallace *fide* Pete Hildreth) and 3 there 3 Jul (DSi), all were singles; 3 Jun at Big Creek L *Polk* (SJD), 11 Jun at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (TM), 14 Jun in *Muscatine* (Bob Kenyon *fide* KJM), 15 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JF), 20–23 Jun, 2–5 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS, DSi, MP), 10 Jul at E Okoboji L *Dickinson* (Greg Steggerda), and 16 Jul at Lower Pine L SP *Hardin* (Erica Place).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Cormorants again were nesting on two spoil islands in *Clinton* on 29 Jun with 990 ads and 800 yg present (SJD). Elsewhere, cormorants seemed more abundant than usual with up to 250 on 15 Jun at Green Island WA *Jackson* (Forrest & Susa Stonedahl) and double digit counts in at least seven other counties (m.ob.).

**Neotropic Cormorant:** All: 2 (one ad, one subad) 6 Jun, 5 (one ad, 4 subad) 23 Jun at Forney L *Fremont* (SJD-ph), and singles 20 Jun–21 Jul at Viking Lake SP *Montgomery* (SLo-ph), 19, 21 Jul at Pool 13 *Clinton* (TM, DAS), ad 16 Jul at Blue L *Monona* (SJD), 24 Jul at Bartlett-Tabor Rd A *Fremont* (WRS), and 31 Jul at Forney L *Fremont* (WRS) comprise the most reports ever in summer.

**American White Pelican:** Pelicans have become fairly common on Iowa's wetlands in summer. They



again were nesting on two spoil islands in *Clinton* on 29 Jun with 975 ads and 690 yg (SJD). Many were seen along the river south of there (e.g., 350 on 6 Jun at Green Island WA *Jackson*, MHB). Double-digit counts were made in >20 counties throughout Iowa (m.ob.). At Hawk-eye WA *Johnson* counts grew from 440 on 16 Jul to 2000 on 25 Jul (MHB, JMc).

**American Bittern:** Other than 2 on 5 Jun at Errington M *Polk* (RLC), all singles in *Dallas*, *Johnson*, *Louisa*, and *Madison* (KVS, SCS, Dan & Robin Brinkman, JLF, Sharon Bauer).

**Least Bittern:** Mostly singles were found in 12 counties, nearly all at sites known to have this species in previous years (m.ob.). All were in an area east and north of a line from *Clay* to *Boone* to *Louisa*. Most: 25 on 5 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (TMH, SJD).

**Great Blue Heron:** Reported statewide with most reports of 1–3 birds (m.ob.). Most: 47 on 12 Jul at Hendrickson M *Story* (DyO).

**Great Egret:** Reported from 31 counties with generally larger concentrations than Great Blue Heron. Several counts of >100 at Green Island WA *Jackson* with 192 there 25 Jul were the most (TM).

**Cattle Egret:** Reports of singles or small groups from *Cerro Gordo*, *Clinton*, *Fremont*, *Marion*, *Mills*, *Plymouth*, and *Story* (m.ob.). Most: 10 on 6 Jun at M.L. Payne WA *Fremont* (SJD) and 6 on 19 Jul at Clinton *Clinton* (TM).

**Green Heron:** Reports came from 37 counties from throughout Iowa, usually of one or 2 birds

(m.ob.).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** All: singles in *Boone*, *Buena Vista*, *Guthrie*, *Hancock*, *Johnson*, *Louisa*, *Montgomery*, and *Muscatine* (m.ob.).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** All: one juv 21 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (Stan Buman-ph) and a juv 8, 11 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF, MHB, BCC).



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Johnson, 8 July 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.

**Turkey Vulture:** Greatest counts were 80 on 24 Jun at Viking Lake SP *Montgomery* (SLo) and 65 on 4 Jul at Ames *Story* (Selena Kiser).

**Osprey:** Numerous reports but the only nests mentioned were in *Black Hawk*, *Jasper*, and *Woodbury* (David Eastman, CW, POR, m.ob.). When I prepared my 2019 report, I had few data on nesting success. Those data, now available, show that of 25 active nests, ten failed, the outcome of three is unknown, and 12 were successful and produced 24 young, a fairly good year.

**Northern Harrier:** Reports, mostly singles, came from eight widely distributed counties (m.ob.) with two birds reported at sites in *Howard* (JG) and *Butler* (Bruce Burroughs). Harriers have nested previ-



*Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Narrows River Access Park, Pottawattamie, 12 June 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



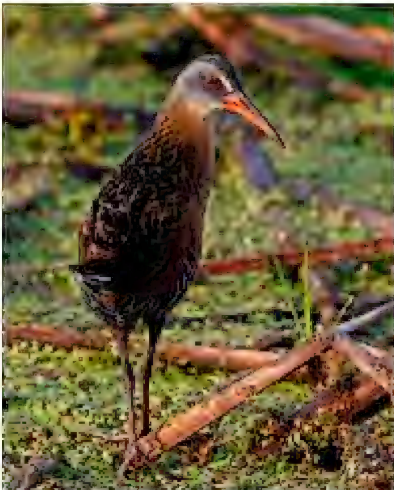
*Ring-necked Pheasant, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 3 July 2020, Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*White-winged Dove, Webster, 23 July 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Virginia Rail chick, Bjorkboda Marsh area, Hamilton, 28 June 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Virginia Rail, Bjorkboda Marsh area, Hamilton, 29 June 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Sandhill Cranes, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Johnson, 26 June 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*





*Killdeer, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 29 June 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Upland Sandpiper, Snake Creek Marsh area, Greene, 30 July 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



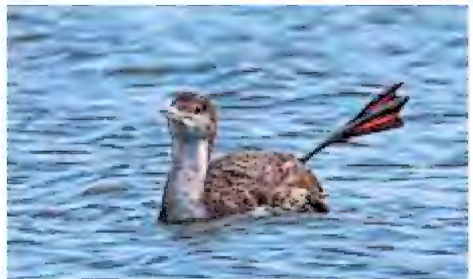
*Pectoral Sandpiper, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Johnson, 11 July 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Wilson's Snipe, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Johnson, 11 July 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Red Phalarope, Eagle Lake, Hancock, 7 June 2020. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Common Loon, Beeds Lake State Park, Franklin, 28 July 2020. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*



*Green Heron, Coralville Reservoir, Johnson, 19 July 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*



*Osprey, Quarry Springs Park, Jasper, 8 July 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*



*Cooper's Hawk, Des Moines, Polk, 18 July 2020. Photograph by Dylan Osterhaus, Ames, IA.*



*Carolina Wren, McIntosh Woods, Cerro Gordo, 22 July 2020. Photograph by Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*



*House Finch, Ogden, Boone, 26 July 2020. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*



*Field Sparrow, Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, Polk, 20 June 2020. Photograph by Tom Dougherty, Urbandale, IA.*





*Vesper Sparrow, Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, Polk, 4 June 2020. Photograph by Tom Dougherty, Urbandale, IA.*



*Yellow-headed Blackbird, Bjorkboda Marsh, Hamilton, 29 June 2020. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Blue-winged Warbler, Danville, Henry, 13 June 2020. Photograph by Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*



*Common Yellowthroat, Little Storm Lake, Buena Vista, 10 July 2020. Photograph by Dana Siefer, Storm Lake, IA.*



*Yellow-throated Warbler, Farmington Unit, Stephens State Forest, Henry, 12 June 2020. Photograph by Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*



*Blue Grosbeak, Ida Grove Cemetery, Ida, 18 June 2020. Photographed by Don Poggensee, Ida Grove, IA.*

ously at Hayden Prairie, the site in Howard.

**Cooper's Hawk:** Mostly singles were found in 44 counties scattered across most of Iowa and northwest to *Cherokee* and *Sioux* (m.ob.). A nest at Ada Hayden P *Story* fledged 5 yg (WO). This species' nesting population and range have grown greatly in recent decades.

**Bald Eagle:** Reported from 59 counties from throughout Iowa (m.ob.). Nests are known for all counties for this now firmly reestablished species.



*Mississippi Kite, West Des Moines, Polk, 8 July 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*

**Mississippi Kite:** Other than a sick/injured ad 9 Jun at Pine Lake SP *Hardin* that was taken to a rehab facility (BCC), all reports were from the two usual sites where they presumably nested. Courtship and nest-building behavior was noted in late May in Ottumwa *Wapello* (Fawn Bowden, m.ob.), and as many as 6 were seen in West Des Moines *Polk* throughout the season (m.ob.) with courtship behavior noted.

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Mostly singles were found in 13 counties in the southeastern half of Iowa (m.ob.).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** One or 2

were found in *Black Hawk*, *Dallas*, *Davis*, *Fremont*, *Lee*, *Muscatine*, *Polk*, *Story*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob.). An ad with 2 yg 25, 26 Jul near Ames *Story* (TMH) was the only report of nesting.

**Barn Owl:** All: two on 17 Jun near Unionville *Appanoose* (Jeremy Cochran) were likely nesting and a family group in early August near St. Mary's WA *Mills* (Matt Dollison) probably had nested there earlier in the summer.

**Barred Owl:** One 9 Jun near Aurelia *Cherokee* (Michael Nelson) was the only report of this species in Iowa's six northwesternmost counties.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** In northwestern Iowa, singles were found 13 Jun at Broken Kettle Grasslands *Plymouth* (SD) and 19 Jun in *Cherokee* (DB).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Mostly one or 2 were found in 16 counties, mainly in the two northernmost rows of counties and south in the east to *Louisa* (m.ob.). Most: 8 on 13 Jun at Princeton M *Scott* (KJM).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Mostly one or 2 from 42 counties, mainly in the eastern half of Iowa. Singles 12 Jun along the Missouri R *Pottawattamie* (SM) and 16 Jul at Blue L *Monona* (SJD) were at the edge of their range. Most: 6 on 18 Jul at Rock Creek P *Clinton* (KJM, MR).

**Merlin:** Two nests were active in Waterloo *Black Hawk*. Three yg left a well observed nest 30 Jul, and 2 ads and 2 fledglings were seen in late July/early August at a second site although a nest was not located (Tom Schilke, Francis Moore, m.ob.). Elsewhere, one was found 2 Jun in Dubuque *Dubuque* (TM).

**Peregrine Falcon:** Relatively few reports. The only nest site mentioned was at the state capitol in Des Moines (RJT).

**Western Kingbird:** Fewer reports than in recent years. Besides reports from western border counties, birds were found in *Polk* where established, and in nearby *Jasper* and *Story* in central Iowa (m.ob.). One 10 Jul in Eldon *Wapello* (JLF) was an outlier.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** The last was one 5 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Last: one 6 Jun at Ram Hollow WA *Delaware* (DAS).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Mostly reports of one or 2 from 32 counties, mainly in the southeastern half of Iowa (m.ob.). Most: 10 on 12 Jun at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JKe).



*Belted Kingfisher, Swan Lake, Johnson, 28 June 2020. Photograph by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA.*

**Alder Flycatcher:** Numerous reports in early June, mostly of singles (m.ob.). Last: one 11 Jun at Saylorsville Res *Polk* (SCS-details).

**Willow Flycatcher:** Found in 55 counties throughout Iowa, most reports were of 1–3 individuals (m.ob.).

**Least Flycatcher:** All: a late

migrant 1 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (SJD) and one 27 Jun near Solon *Johnson* (CRE).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Most reports were from western Iowa and other than reports of 3 or 4 in *Plymouth* (BFH, Jerry Probst, m.ob.), most were singles in *Adair*, *Fremont*, *Iowa*, *Montgomery*, *Page*, and *Taylor* (m.ob.). No one mentioned seeing young birds.

**White-eyed Vireo:** Most reports came from two areas; about half from Croton, Donnellson, and Lick Creek units in Shimek SF *Lee* (CRE, MHB, JMc, m.ob.) and a number of others from Macbride Nature A *Johnson* (BCC, JDM, m.ob.). Others were from *Davis* (SPP), *Linn* (MHB), *Montgomery* (SLo-details), *Polk* (SJD), *Van Buren* (Kyle Belcher), and *Wapello* (RU). An outlier was one 25 Jun at Volga River RA *Fayette* (CRE).

**Bell's Vireo:** Most reports of one or 2, from 44 counties in much of the state except for far northwestern Iowa (m.ob.).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Reported from 56 counties from throughout Iowa. Most reports were of 1–3 birds (m.ob.). Most: 13 on 23 Jun at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (KJM).



*Willow Flycatcher, Owego Wetlands, Woodbury, 27 June 2020. Photograph by Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*



**Blue-headed Vireo:** One 1 Jun near Coralville L *Johnson* (Jonah Alderson-details) is Iowa's fifth summer record and the first since 2008.

**FISH CROW:** All reports were of one or 2 from 13 Jun–27 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD, \*CW, \*AB, \*MP, m.ob.) where they were seen this spring.

**Bank Swallow:** The most reported was 150 on 25 Jul at Burlington *Des Moines* (Bobby Wilcox).

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** The most reported was 50 on 24 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (LQ).

**Tufted Titmouse:** Reported from 40 counties south and east of a line from *Winneshiek* to *Fremont* (m.ob.). Most reports were of 1–3 birds.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** All: singles 24 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (LAS), 30 Jun at Ledges SP *Boone* (KJ), and 22 Jul at Grammer Grove P *Marshall* (MP-details).

**Brown Creeper:** Other than one 5 Jun at Polk City *Polk* (John Walter), all were from the Mississippi R lowlands; 2 on 13 Jun at Rock Creek P *Clinton* (KJM, MR), 3 on 13 Jun at Princeton M *Scott* (KJM), and 2 on 15 and one 23 Jun in Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (LQ, KJM).

**Sedge Wren:** Reported from 52 counties statewide south to the Missouri border (m.ob.). Most: 26 on 1 Jun at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS).

**Marsh Wren:** Reported from 38 counties, mostly in the northern half of Iowa and south to *Dallas*, *Polk*, and *Louisa* (m.ob.). Most: 25 on 28 Jun at Green Island WA *Jackson* (EEO) and 20 on 5 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (TMH).

**Carolina Wren:** Found in 41 counties mostly in the eastern half of Iowa but none north of a line from *Allamakee* to *Cerro Gordo* to *Woodbury*. Most reports were of one or 2 birds (m.ob.).

**Bewick's Wren:** One seen 11, 22 Jun at the usual junk yard near Argyle *Lee* (SD, Steven Freed).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Mostly one or 2 were found in 52 counties in all but northwestern Iowa (m.ob.). Most: 28 on 23 Jun at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (KJM).

**Veery:** Singles 17 Jun in *Allamakee* (PDBS), 23 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (BCC), 4 Jul in Amana Woods Iowa (JBo), 2 on 14 Jun at Amana Timber Iowa (JF), and 5 on 16 Jun at Matsell Bridge WA *Linn* (JF).

**Wood Thrush:** Reported from 56 counties from all sections of Iowa (m.ob.). Most reports were of one or 2 birds.



*Wood Thrush, Clayton Avenue, Henry, 13 June 2020. Photograph by Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*

**Northern Mockingbird:** Reported from 13 counties, mostly in the southern third of Iowa but north to *Benton* and *Cerro Gordo* (m.ob.). A nest 18 Jul se of Mason City (Betty Lucas, RGo, Carolyn Fischer) is a first for *Cerro Gordo* and one of the northernmost nests reported for



Iowa.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Reported from 73 counties from throughout Iowa (m.ob.). Many groups of 10–12 birds with the most 27 on 30 Jun at Cedar L *Linn* (Rosemary Joganic).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Reports, mostly of 1–3 birds, came from 17 counties in its established range south and east of *Story* (m.ob.). Most: 14 on 13 Jun in *Clinton* (KJM). One 6 Jul in *Cerro Gordo* (Curt Nelson-details) was the first for that county. At Ada Hayden P *Story*, a female nested three times with a male House Sparrow and another female nested twice with a hybrid House x Eurasian Tree Sparrow (WO, SJD).

**Pine Siskin:** All: one 11 Jun in Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KJM, TLo), 2 on 19, 20 Jun at Cherokee *Cherokee* (DB), one 4 Jul south of Boone *Boone* (KJ), and one 11 Jul in Norwalk *Warren* (Jay Gilliam).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Reported from 46 counties across all of Iowa (m.ob.).

**Lark Sparrow:** Reported from 33 counties scattered throughout Iowa. Most reports were of one or 2 birds. Most: 17 on 19 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Reported from *Dickinson*, *Hancock*, *Howard*, *Lyon*, and *Winnebago*, all in the northern two rows of counties (m.ob.). Most reports were of 1–4 birds; 8 on 10 Jul at Little Swan L *Dickinson* (LAS) and 8 on 27 Jul at Turkey River WA *Howard* (NA) were the most.

**Dark-eyed Junco:** One 3 Jun in Scranton *Greene* (Matt Stephenson) was well described. It is Iowa's sixth summer record of the species and the

first since 2011.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** A male 13 Jun at Jester P *Polk* (RJT-ph) is Iowa's fifth summer record, the first since 2011, and the third latest.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Reported from 30 counties from much of Iowa but only one 13 Jun at Broken Kettle Grasslands *Plymouth* (SD) in the area north and west of *Boone* (m.ob.). Most: 16 on 1 Jun at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS).

**Savannah Sparrow:** Reports, mostly of one or 2 birds, were from 18 counties, mainly in the northern half of Iowa (m.ob.). The southernmost report was of one 20 Jul in *Van Buren* (J.G. Chapman, Therese Cumiskey).

**Swamp Sparrow:** Reports, mostly of one or 2 birds, were from 31 counties, mostly in the northern half of Iowa and south to *Louisa* (m.ob.).

**Eastern Towhee:** Reported from 66 counties throughout Iowa (m.ob.). Most reports of one or 2 birds, the most were reports of 10 in *Fremont*, *Lucas*, and *Pottawattamie* (SG, EEO, TM).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Reported from 26 counties, more than usual including *Polk*, *Warren*, and *Jasper* (m.ob.). Most reports were of one or 2 with 6 on 30 Jun at Mines of Spain RA *Dubuque* (DAS) the most. Other than reports from *Fremont* and *Montgomery*, all were found south and east of a line from *Dubuque* to *Polk* to *Decatur*.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Reported from 23 counties, mainly in north-central and northwestern Iowa but south to *Fremont* in the west and *Jackson* in the east (m.ob.). Most: 50 on 5 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (TMH).

**Bobolink:** Found in 54 counties with the number of reports generally declining as one moved south in the state. A few were found in counties bordering Missouri; e.g. *Davis*, *Fremont*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob.). Most: 30 on 22 Jun at Eagle Flats *Hancock* (BCC).



*Bobolink, Ledges State Park, Boone, 23 June 2020. Photograph by Clayton Will, Madrid, IA.*

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Reported from 83 counties, with reports from eight of nine Missouri River border counties (m.ob.). Two on 24 Jun at Blood Run A *Lyon* (LAS) were in what once was solid Western Meadowlark country. Most: 18 on 13 Jun along the Floyd R in *Woodbury* (BFH) and 17 on 1 Jun at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS).

**Western Meadowlark:** Reported from 37 counties (m.ob.), fewer than half the total for Eastern Meadowlark. The easternmost report was one 28 Jun in *Clinton* (EEO).

**Orchard Oriole:** With reports from 54 counties, other than in parts of northwestern Iowa, this species was reported from throughout Iowa (m.ob.).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Up to 6 were found in *Calhoun*, *Clay*, *Fremont*, *Greene*, *Guthrie*, *Kossuth*, *Palo Alto*, *Polk*, *Pottawattamie*, and *Story* (m.ob.), many of them traditional

sites and all in the western half of Iowa (m.ob.). Most: 38 on 16 Jul at Blue L *Monona* (SJD).

**Ovenbird:** Reports, mostly of 1–3 birds, were from 26 counties south and east of a line from *Allamakee* to *Pottawattamie* with outliers in *Woodbury* and *Sac* (m.ob.). Most: 20 on 13 at Lucas Unit *Lucas* (EEO).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** All: one 8 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE), one there 11–27 Jun (SD, MP, POR, m.ob.), and one 10 Jul at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (Karl Grotheer).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** Reported from 21 counties south of a line from *Delaware* to *Fremont* with most reports of one or 2 birds (m.ob.).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** Most reports were of one or 2 from 16 counties and, other than one 1 Jun near Ada Hayden P *Story* (SJD), nearly all were in the eastern third of Iowa (m.ob.).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** All: one 8 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE), one there 21 Jun (MHB, CRE), and one 7 Jul in Johnston *Polk* (Eileen Robb *fide* DTh, details).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** Mostly singles in 13 counties, mainly along the Mississippi R or its major tributaries. Most: 44 on 13 Jun at Rock Creek P *Clinton* (KJM) and 20 on 7 Jun at Green Island WA *Jackson* (EEO).

**Tennessee Warbler:** All: one 16 Jun at Red Cedar WA *Muscatine* (RU) was late.

**Kentucky Warbler:** Reported from 17 counties in southern and eastern Iowa. Most reports were of one or 2 birds (m.ob.). Most: 10 on 3 Jul at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (AnS).

**Hooded Warbler:** More reports than usual: one 11 Jun at Mines of

Spain RA *Dubuque* (DAS, Craig Kruse), one 11, 12 Jun at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (SD, JKe), one 24 Jun at Soap Creek WA *Davis* (SPP), one 27 Jun at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (ErS, JCo), one 3 Jul at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (AnS), and one 13 Jul, 2 on 21 Jul at Unionville Unit *Appanoose* (TNJ, Chuck Fuller).

**American Redstart:** Reported from 60 counties from throughout Iowa. Most reports of 1–3 birds. Most: 50 on 11 Jun at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KJM, TLo).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Reports, mostly of one or 2, came from *Allamakee*, *Clayton*, *Dubuque*, *Iowa*, *Johnson*, *Lee*, *Linn*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob.).

**Northern Parula:** Reported from 23 counties mainly in the southeastern half of Iowa (m.ob.). Most reports were of one or 2 with 8 on 12 Jun at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JKe) the most.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** The only report was one 27 Jun at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (JCo-details, ErS).

**Pine Warbler:** All: one 16 Jun at Farmington Unit *Van Buren* (TNJ) where it has been found previously.

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Reports, mostly of one or 2, were from 12 counties and other than reports

from *Polk* and *Story*, all were from the eastern third of Iowa (m.ob.).

**PRAIRIE WARBLER:** All: 2 on 11 Jun (SD) and one 12 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (POR, MP) presumably were the same birds reported at this site in May.

**Summer Tanager:** Reports, mostly of one or 2, came from 25 counties, mainly in the eastern half of Iowa and the southern half of the state. Outliers were birds west to *Freemont* and *Pottawattamie* and north to *Calhoun* and *Dubuque* (m.ob.).

**Scarlet Tanager:** Reported from 50 counties from throughout Iowa. Most reports were of 1–3 birds (m.ob.).

**Northern Cardinal:** The only report from northwesternmost Iowa was one 3 Jul in Larchwood *Lyon* (Will Anderson).

**Blue Grosbeak:** Reports came from 25 counties as it consolidated gaps in its range expansion. From along the Missouri R, birds were found east to *Buena Vista*, *Calhoun*, *Story*, and *Warren* and in the East, north to *Cerro Gordo*, *Floyd*, and *Black Hawk* (m.ob.).

**Dickcissel:** Usually uncommon in northeastern Iowa, this species had a good year there with 27 eBird reports from the northeastern corner (m.ob.).

## COMMENT

This report includes a total of 173 species, somewhat fewer than the 178 species last year and about average for recent years. This is mainly due to finding fewer late migrants than last year. A total of 51 additional species were reported to me as having been found during the summer and one other species, Greater Prairie-Chickens almost certainly was present but not reported. This gives a total of 225 species that occurred in Iowa during the summer season, matching the average of recent years. Species that were not reported this sum-

mer include Common Merganser (second time in 10 years), Ruffed Grouse, Eared Grebe and Hudsonian Godwit (both missed for the first time in five years), Snowy Egret, Swainson’s Hawk, Swainson’s Thrush, and Mourning Warbler. Two of those, Ruffed Grouse and Swainson’s Hawk, I fear are in danger of disappearing from our nesting avifauna.

As has been typical for the last several years, I received a tremendous amount of data to try to summarize. I received 81,161 reports on eBird, 793 from the IOU listserve, another 2,163 reports that were sent directly to me, and 582 from the Iowa Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring (MSIM) program of the Iowa DNR, a total of 84,700 reports. I am indebted to Paul Skrade and Ann Johnson who sorted and filtered the eBird data set down to a more manageable 25,728 reports. Paul Skrade also helped me obtain additional information on several eBird reports. Steve Dinsmore helped clarify a number of reports, provided a summary of his sightings, and provided me with access to the reports from the MSIM program of the Iowa DNR and Iowa State University. Paul Hertzell provided me with a timely summary of reviews by the Records Committee. To those individuals, the contributors listed below, and the hundreds of others who took the time to submit their reports, I am grateful for your efforts. Without you, this report would not be possible.

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## Book Review: With Wings Extended: A Leap into the Wood Duck's World

Bobby Walz



*With Wings Extended: A Leap into the Wood Duck's World* by Greg Hoch. 2020. 190 pages, 3 black & white figures, 1 table, 19 color photos, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, ISBN 978-1609386955, \$35.00 (paperback).

This book is about the science and life history of Wood Ducks. It explains their taxonomy and anatomy, nesting habits, diet, habitat, and migration. This book was written for birdwatchers and ornithologists, because you need to know about the other species mentioned in the book, and some of the technical words with which most people aren't familiar.

The book starts with an introduction about “the most beautiful duck on Earth”, as the author describes this neat bird. It talks about the basics of Wood Duck behavior and habitat. It also shows you that the Wood Duck is very different from other ducks because of its strange food preferences, nesting sites, habitat, and behavior, like perching in trees even though they have webbed feet.

After the introduction, there are nine chapters explaining the complex life of the Wood Duck. The chapters talk about their Latin name and what it means, their beautiful plumage, and what they eat and at what time of year. You then learn about why they nest in tree cavities and man-made boxes, egg incubation, habitat, history, spring and fall migration, and hunting and conservation of Wood Ducks. In these nine chapters are about a dozen pictures of their habitats, foods, plumages, and eggs. There are a few charts and graphs about when and where some were banded. Throughout the chapters are also many quotes from people who studied these ducks, and from famous ornithologists.

The book ends with a conclusion about why Wood Ducks are so special in the duck family, and why so many birders and ornithologists like them so much. It also encourages you to go look for Wood Ducks, so you can recognize their beauty and complexity.

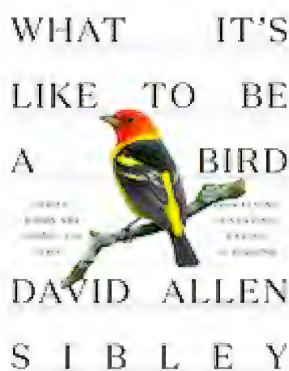
One of my favorite parts of this book was the quotes from ornithologists and birdwatchers. It really helps show how people have seen and been interested in these ducks for hundreds of years. It also helps you see all the strange and interesting ways people have described them over time.

Again, this book is more for birders and ornithologists, because it gets into the fine details about these ducks. So, if you're a beginning birdwatcher, or just looking to learn about the basic life of the Wood Duck, I would recommend finding another field guide that just has a small section about them. If you do read this book, it will really teach you to appreciate this amazing duck.

*Bobby Walz is a 13-year-old member of Iowa Young Birders and can be contacted through Tyler Harms (tyler@iowayoungbirders.org).*

## Book Review: Two Behavior Books

Rick Hollis



*What It's Like to Be a Bird: From Flying to Nesting, Eating to Singing—What Birds Are Doing, and Why* by David Allen Sibley. 2020. 240 pages, 335 full-color illustrations, Knopf, New York, ISBN 978-0307957894, \$35.00 (hard cover).

*The Bird Way: A New Look at How Birds Talk, Work, Play, Parent, and Think* by Jennifer Ackerman. 2020. 368 pages, 16 line drawings, Penguin Press, New York, ISBN: 978-0735223011, \$28.00 (hard cover).

This review describes two very different books that take us deeply inside the entity we call a bird. Those of us who are interested in what birds are doing will find both of these well-written books to be worthwhile reads.

David Allen Sibley is a well-respected ornithologist who has authored and illustrated many books. You should make it a point to read his lengthy introduction even if you are a person who typically skips sections numbered with roman numerals, as it is marvelous and contains a great many facts. These are sort of tossed at the reader, rather than being embedded textbook style, but they are gratefully received. Two examples are that the amount of blackness in some bird feathers is due not just to melanin but also to feather structure, and that three quarters of migratory bird species are sexually dimorphic, while over three quarters of sedentary species are monomorphic. There is also humor, as when Sibley mentions, regarding the Greater Roadrunner, “Contrary to the classic cartoon, they are not at war with coyotes.”

The *Portfolio of Birds* section guides the reader through species and families: “Great Horned Owl”, “More Owls”, “American Robin”, “Nesting Cycle of a Robin”, “Thrushes”, “Bluebird”. The sections vary somewhat—some have more text, others have more illustrations, and odd little facts abound throughout. Some struck me as astonishing, including that Great Blue Herons can handle a one-pound fish, which Sibley compares to a 100-pound person eating a 17-pound fish whole. I envision a future IOU banquet at which members are served 20 pounds of fish without utensils. Also, were you aware that birds have an extra balance sensor near their pelvis, which helps them maintain a one-legged stance? The subjects seem to go wherever Sibley’s mind went and, along with a layout which includes a bit too much empty space, the unconventional lack of an index is one of this book’s few faults. One would have to do quite a bit of thumbing around in order to locate and read everything on a specific topic. Feathers, for example, were discussed in at least four different

places.

I was really looking forward to reading *What It's Like to Be a Bird*, and I was not disappointed. I'm sure it will be one that I pull down again in the future, as it effectively helps the reader to understand what we observe our avian friends doing. I believe birders will learn a great deal from Sibley's words and paintings and will greatly enjoy doing so.



Jennifer Ackerman is an accomplished writer about science and nature. She clearly likes birds and the science which explains them. Having read her earlier book, *The Genius of Birds*, I knew I wanted to read *The Bird Way*, her third bird book.

The first sentence in the introduction declares, “There is the mammal way and there is the bird way.” Ackerman attributes this quote to an unknown scientist, then proceeds over and over again to point out the ways in which birds do things differently from mammals. For that matter, birds differ from other birds as not all species do the same things the same way. The book concludes: “It’s what I love about birds. They are inconsistent and unpredictable, as *varied* as any group of animals on earth.”

This may not be a book to read in a single setting, as bird enthusiasts will want to savor the information presented. For every chapter in the book I could list item after item that I found incredibly interesting. When you read this book, and I highly recommend you do so, you will similarly find much that will fascinate you.

The book is simply arranged, with five major sections entitled *Talk*, *Work*, *Play*, *Love*, and *Parent*. Each section has two to four chapters of about 20 pages, headed by a nice line drawing. In *Talk*, the chapters are “Dawn Chorus”, “Cause for Alarm”, and “Superb Parroting”. In her discussion of calls, Ackerman mentions human whistle languages. I did not know there were human whistled languages, but there are, although they seem to be dying out. These languages have arisen among peoples in dense forests or steep terrains, and have specific rules as we expect a language to have. It fascinated me to learn that avian languages have rules as well, including something akin to grammar.

*Work* has “The Scent of Sustenance”, “Hot Tools”, and “Tracing the Ant’s Path”. In “Hot Tools” she mentions that Palm Cockatoos cut and trim sticks and use that to drum against a tree, similar to woodpecker drumming but without hammering with the bill.

*Play* has two chapters, but what wonderful chapters they are: “Birds of Play” and “Clowns of the Mountains”. They are a joy and go into great detail about how two particular species engage in play behavior.

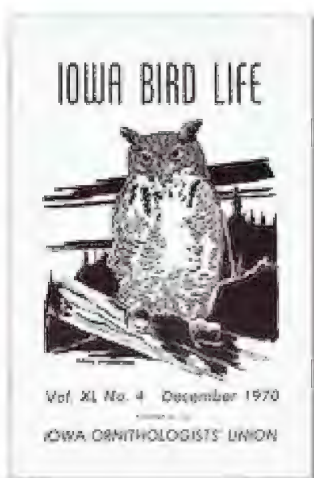
*Love* has “Sex”, “Wild Wooing”, and “Brain Teasers”. Broad-tailed Hummingbirds have display flights. The male does a marvelous synchronized high-speed dive at the females, changing direction at the bottom, then flying rapidly

upwards. Near the bottom his tail gives a buzzing sound, which changes tone as the hummingbird goes past the female. His gorget flashes from magenta to bright red to a very dark green in a span of 120 milliseconds. All of this, the change in direction, the shift in tone of the tail buzz and the color flashes of the gorget are tightly coordinated. From male to male, the displays seem pretty much the same. What makes a female choose a certain male over other is not yet known.

Both *The Bird Way* and *What It's Like to Be a Bird* help us really understand how birds work. Sibley's shorter book mentions more families but tells us less about them and has nice illustrations of many of the things he discusses. Ackerman's book hits far fewer topics but goes into much more detail and includes newer research. I like them both for those reasons, and recommend them highly to IOU members.

Armchair birders should note that this has been a bountiful year for books on bird behavior. In addition to the two reviewed here, others in print this year include *Peterson Reference Guide to Bird Behavior* by John Kricher; *Bird Senses: How and What Birds See, Hear, Smell, Taste, and Feel* by Graham R. Martin; *How Birds Work: An Illustrated Guide to the Wonders of Form and Function—from Bones to Beak* by Marianne Taylor; and *Understanding Bird Behavior: An Illustrated Guide to What Birds Do and Why* by Wenfei Tong.

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Note: The December 1970 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* consists entirely of the five-year index for 1966-1970. Thus there is no Fifty Years Ago column in this issue of *Iowa Bird Life*—JJD.

Answer to quiz question in Field Reports Conservation Section: Iowa's six national wildlife refuges are DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge, Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, and Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge.



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*Compiled by James J. Dinsmore*

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**BACK COVER PHOTO:** Red-necked Grebe, Trumbull Lake, *Clay*, 27 June 2020. Photograph by Dana Siefer, Storm Lake, IA.

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